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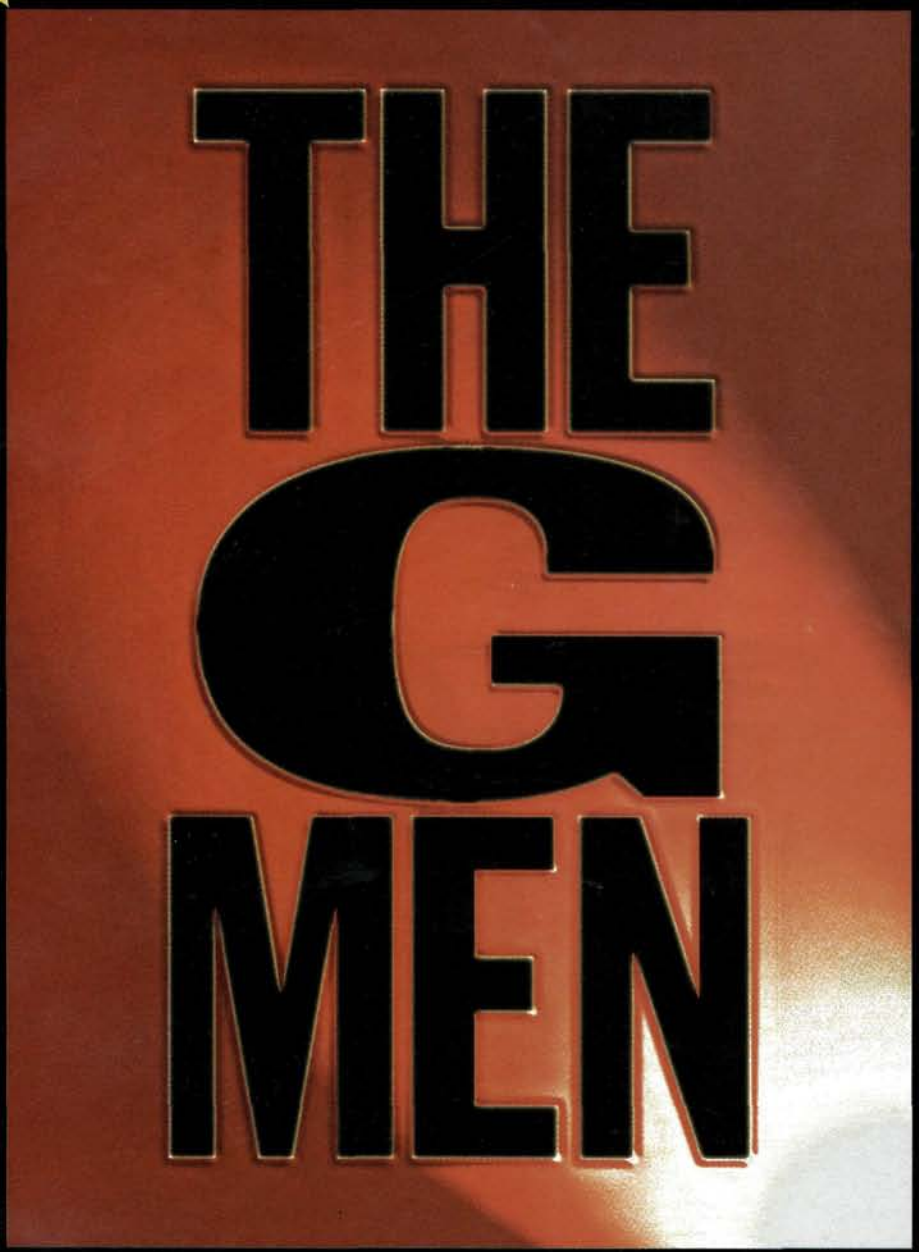

The Creepy Unanimity of Gingrich's Henchmen

{BY WESTON KOSOVA}

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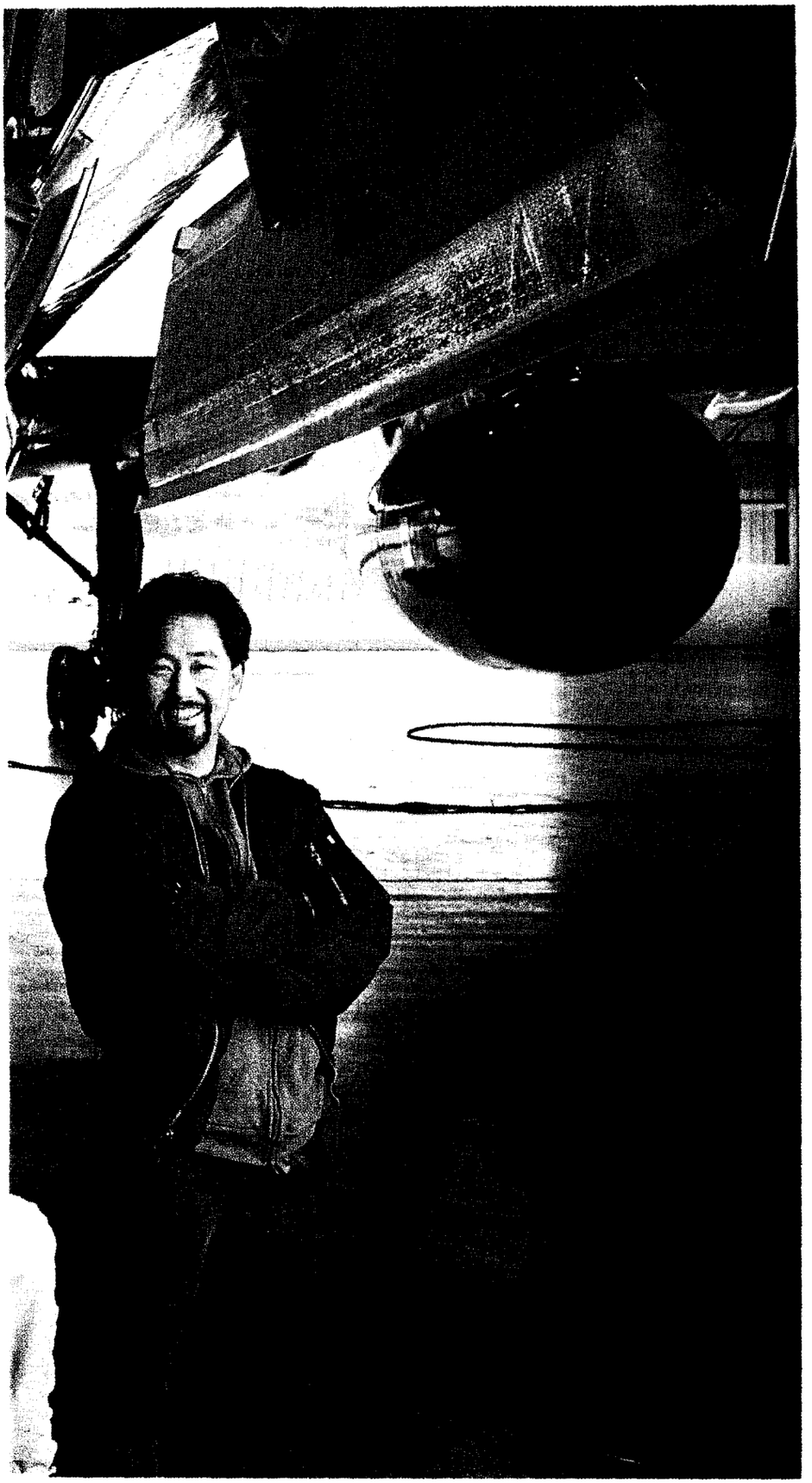

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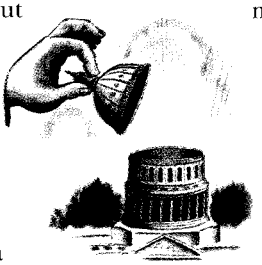
FROM WASHINGTON

Newt vs. Big Bird

Newt Gingrich, in his campaign to kill the Corporation for Public Broadcasting (CPB), invokes the standard argument against public television: narrowcasting. Cable T.V., by producing nutritious yet commercially viable fare, has rendered subsidized television obsolete. The Discovery Channel brings us science, Arts & Entertainment brings us culture—so why can't PBS, too, survive in the marketplace? "Arts & Entertainment is not up here lobbying" for government handouts, Gingrich notes acidly.

On the day I'm writing this column, the schedule for Arts & Entertainment, beginning at 7 a.m., runs as follows: "Classroom," "Lou Grant," "Columbo," "Columbo," "Police Story," "Rockford Files," "McCloud," "Banacek," "Lou Grant," "Police Story." That gets us to 7 p.m., which brings "Rockford Files," "Biography: Brigitte Bardot," "Movie: Deceived by Flight," "Law and Order." Then, at midnight: "Biography: Brigitte Bardot," "Movie: Deceived by Flight," "Law and Order." And so on: all culture all the time—without government help!

Granted, some cable channels, such as Bravo and The Learning Channel, are less cheesy than A&E. But they, too, generate little new programming. Their staple is reruns, often of shows that were created with subsidies from the British or American government. Just look at what happens with genres where cheap reruns won't work—like a nightly newscast. If PBS is obsolete, then why has the private sector produced nothing even remotely resembling "The MacNeil/Lehrer NewsHour," a national asset that by itself would justify a sizable chunk of the measly $285 million that CPB gets from Washington? (That's for PBS *and* NPR.)



On the children's programming front, PBS's competition comes in two forms. First, there's trash, such as Fox's "Mighty Morphin Power Rangers." (Rupert Murdoch, Fox's owner and Gingrich's publisher, no doubt applauds the war against CPB. And he no doubt was pleased when Gingrich invited the Power Rangers to Capitol Hill on the opening day of Congress.) Then there are shows—on Nickelodeon, for example—that, while no intellectual match for Big Bird, are fairly educational and generally harmless. Unfortunately, this more benign fare is often sandwiched between commercials for junk cereals, Mighty Morphin Power Rangers (the toys, not the show), gross teenage dolls and assorted plastic weaponry. PBS remains the only channel in front of which it is entirely safe to park your child. And the Republican proposal to "privatize public television" (Do I sense some irony here?) would assuredly leave us with no such channels before long.

You'd think that a man who frets chronically about the moral values inculcated in our young, about educating Americans for a "knowledge society," would not casually imperil the only safe educational haven for children in all of television. But for Gingrich to admit that PBS is the only such haven would mean admitting that technology and markets, his twin cure-all for America, brought us much of what he seeks to cure. Television, by serving as surrogate parent, has helped disrupt the intergenerational transmission of values, including "family values." And the market-driven narrower casting that Gingrich celebrates won't help. Dozens of mutant MTVs, I boldly predict, will not restore this nation's moral fiber.

Narrower casting also deepens America's political and cultural balkanization. Mightn't the case for subsidizing nationally unifying media actually grow stronger as technological fragmentation proceeds apace? If "The MacNeil/Lehrer NewsHour" provides a nationwide forum for ideologically diverse policy wonks, and if the Cookie Monster is a lingua franca for black and white children, aren't these effects to be cherished?

There are plenty of good arguments about PBS. Should it capture more of the profit from Barney dolls, Ken Burns books and so on? Yes—and it's moving in that direction. Does it waste money on bureaucratic overhead? Presumably. Will the private sector *eventually* fill much or all of its niche? Probably. But to act as if the market has already done that is to exhibit an enthusiasm for capitalism and for technology wholly unfettered by con-

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THE NEW REPUBLIC

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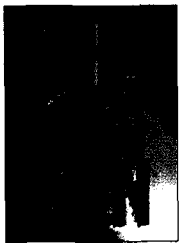

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CORRESPONDENCE

Confetti

To the editors:

TNR's propensity to throw the word "hypocrisy" around like confetti has always amused me, and so it did again when you stuck the label on me ("Notebook," February 13) for my support of defense projects, the "oil-drilling industry" and a sports stadium in my Louisiana district. I'll always plead guilty to supporting a stronger national security structure, whether the cash goes to my district or to Dogpatch, USA. But oil drilling is pork? You would do that troubled industry a favor by identifying hidden appropriations that could benefit it. I don't remember providing any.

As for the $1 million allocated for the stadium: that specific expenditure was directly challenged on the House floor, and overwhelmingly sustained by a vote of the full House membership. Why? It probably was because the stadium was being rehabilitated for the U.S. Olympic trials. I guess most folks found a minor grant for that purpose to be in the national interest.

ROBERT L. LIVINGSTON
House of Representatives
Washington, D.C.

Fine China

To the editors:

I used to think that Andrew J. Nathan was one of the few intelligent observers of China. So I was a bit surprised by his recent article "Beijing Blues" (January 23). On the surface, Nathan gets his facts straight, noting many instances of human rights abuses in China. He points out, for instance, that China's leading dissident was incarcerated for "speaking his mind with foreign reporters"; that the state "purposely infected" a labor leader with tuberculosis; and that, in China, fundamental human rights do not exist.

But Nathan somehow deduces from this that the Chinese people are complacent about their own rights. "That is why," he writes, "so few of them need to be repressed." In a country where the truth cannot be printed or broadcast or uttered at a public trial, isn't everyone repressed?

Nathan seems to suggest that this reluctance to speak out is somehow peculiar to China, a tenet of some inbred "Chinese religion" (a notion that sounds like the line taken by the regime itself). But any dictator stays in power by terrorizing all who are under him. If people are afraid for their lives, they rarely challenge the man with the gun to their heads. Only heroes do so, and heroes, in any culture, are in short supply.

JOE CUOMO
Flushing, New York

Class warfare

To the editors:

In her article on Teach for America ("Mrs. Ed," January 23), Sara Mosle counters Linda Darling-Hammond's work with her own selective anecdotal evidence. Then she proffers the possibility that Hammond's ideas will preclude people like Jonathan Kozol from ever teaching in America's classrooms. Mosle never questions whether Kozol ever should have taught. Kozol is an exceptional writer, but as a teacher we only have his own interpretation of his "success."

Clearly, teacher education in America needs restructuring. The answer, however, is not to short-circuit the teacher education process, but rather to restructure what exists and make it better for all who enter America's classrooms. With programs such as Teach for America out there, restructuring is less likely to occur. After all, why restructure what can be done on the cheap?

THOMAS J. LASLEY
Washington, D.C.

To the editors:

Virtually every formal teacher education program, from the weakest to the most demanding, provides an opportunity to gauge a new teacher's abilities and potential through a student-teaching internship. It's hard to imagine learning any complex activity—filling a tooth, sweating a pipe, preparing a legal brief—without some sort of supervised apprenticeship. Teach for America, however, does not provide such an experience. It places inexperienced people directly into the classroom to sink or swim. This trial-and-error approach to teaching almost never occurs in affluent school districts, which can hire smart, dedicated teachers who have already proved they can teach kids.

I have little doubt that TFAers are helping schools in dire circumstances. But I worry that projects like Teach for America do not solve our education problems as much as they delay our coming to grips with them.

SHARON LYNCH
Washington, D.C.

Deceptive

To the editors:

Herbert Stein, in "Bill of Goods" (January 23), is deceptive in implying that a balanced budget will "cost" more than running the deficit. He is also deceptive in implying that, because someone doesn't receive a government check, he has somehow "paid." His objections to the "Fiscal Responsibility Act" arise not just from the question of who will pay and who will receive but from the question of power—between the two parties and, more important, between the people and their government.

If a government operates with a balanced budget, it loses power. Not only is it limited to what it can extract from the taxpayer, but there is a heightened struggle within government to justify use of the available dollars. If, on the other hand, the government can run a deficit, it assumes immense powers. Not only is the internal struggle eased, but the money is safely spent. In addition, it is now easier to raise taxes because the taxpayer can be made to believe it is his patriotic duty to pay off the deficit. We might object to the original spending, but who can object to paying our debts?

RICHARD S. BLAKE
East Falmouth, Massachusetts

To the editors:

Herbert Stein notes that the rate of increase of real incomes in the United States has slowed over the past twenty years and the "reasons ... are largely a mystery." The reasons may simply be poor accounting techniques. During the rapid-growth 1950s and '60s, there was little federal environmental legislation in effect. While we counted the real economic growth that took place, we didn't subtract the real economic losses due to pollution. Alternatively, we don't count today's greater environmental friendliness of goods and services when figuring current economic growth. If we include environmental costs and benefits in our national accounting, the past twenty years stand up better against the previous twenty.

ARNOLD NADLER
Salem, Massachusetts

Atom bomb

To the editors:

You should be ashamed of yourselves for allowing Jacob Weisberg ("Dirty Books," New York Diarist, January 23) to intimate that there is no difference between belief in angels and belief in atoms. There are three substantial differences, two philosophical and one practical.

First, belief in atoms is due to experiment and is testable, unlike belief in angels, which is due to authority and credulity. Second, belief in atoms is

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part of a theoretical continuum that is intended to explain all phenomena from subatomic particles to galaxies, including the biochemical and physiological basis for the human organism. Belief in angels, while part of some religious beliefs, is not at all essential to those beliefs. A theology without angels would say just as much, or rather, just as little, about reality as those that do contain angels. Third, belief in atoms has practical consequences, both military and commercial, that are largely responsible for the support of science by social elements that care little about philosophical arguments and would probably be against science on general principles were it not for the practical benefits. Belief in angels, on the other hand, confers no practical benefits, except to vendors of magical charms and chants.

Undoubtedly, most people in our society believe in atoms in the same unthinking way they believe in angels, as part and parcel of the prevailing zeitgeist, and fail to understand or even perceive the contradiction. This says nothing about the respective validity of these beliefs and everything about the failings of education and the conservatism of culture.

S. JASON OLASKY
Rockville, Maryland

To the editors:
Brent D. Shaw reviewing John Boswell's *Same-Sex Unions in Premodern Europe* ("A Groom of One's Own?" July 18 & 25, 1994): "There is no indication in the texts themselves that these are marriages in any sense that the word would mean to readers now, nor in any sense that the word would have meant to persons then." Jacob Weisberg ("Dirty Books," New York Diarist, January 23) praising the book: "which documents the existence of a gay marriage ceremony through the Middle Ages."

Shaw: "This sort of tendentious translation of the documents is found, alas, throughout the book." *Weisberg*: "The liturgies Boswell disinterred and lovingly translated from the Greek and Old Slavonic."

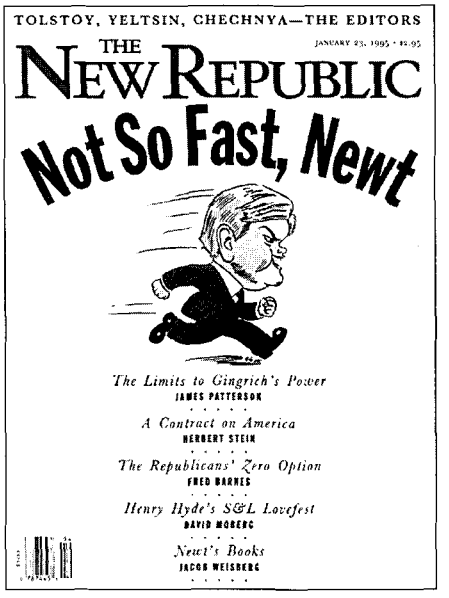
Shaw: "The rest of Boswell's book does nothing other than provide an interpretive basis for the erroneous claims made about these documents, and there is little in it that is new or significant." *Weisberg*: "The book's scholarship is as meticulous as Boswell's always was."

Do your own contributors ever read your magazine?

MARCELO MAREQUE
Washington, D.C.

To the editors:
It is gratifying to read that Jacob Weisberg is venturing into the city's subway system and finding it "surprisingly clean and safe." But, in rendering thanks to Mayor Rudolph Giuliani, he shows that he still hasn't grasped the complexity of the transit system as a political artifact. Improvements in cleanliness and safety, first of all, antedated the Giuliani administration. In any case, since the Transit Authority, which runs the system, is a highly autonomous agency, City Hall's power to effect change is circumscribed. Giuliani's attempt to fold the system's Transit Police into the NYPD is now tied up in court.

I also question Weisberg's hypothesis about the relationship between the subway as a physical environment—"moving platforms[?], odors, extremes of climate, performance beggars and full-time residents"—and lunatic behavior. Colin Ferguson's murders were committed on the Long Island Railroad. Once it passes under the East River, the LIRR runs in the open and its platforms are indistinguishable, in terms of mobility, odors and populations, from those of any other suburban commuter line.



MURRAY HAUSKNECHT
Long Island City, New York

Wrinkled, cranky and bitter

To the editors:
I have been disappointed lately by Stanley Kauffmann's film criticism. In his review of *Nobody's Fool* ("High Gear and Low," January 9 & 16), Kauffmann says that Paul Newman looks too good to play a man who has suffered disappointment. The assumption that someone irresponsible and disappointed must be wrinkled, cranky and bitter buys into the worst clichés of Hollywood casting.

Regarding *Nell* ("Early Winter Roundup," January 23): Kauffmann writes of Foster's "limitations of voice, movement and feature." Is this a euphemism for the fact that he does not think her good-looking enough? Good-looking enough for what? And if he is to fault Jodie Foster for anything, he should choose something other than her lack of "star quality." Kauffmann finds *Nell* an act of ego. Why then does he bring up "star quality"? If one faults ego as a motive, why feed it by looking for this ineffable, quasi-charismatic Hollywood commodity? This blurs entertainment and art. It confuses a persona created purely of physical construct—a marketing tool of the entertainment industry—with the work of the actor.

Maybe filmmakers could get down to the business of making films if critics reviewed them, not the personalities who make them.

TED ALTSCHULER
Chicago, Illinois

Capital crimes

To the editors:
Thank you to Federal Communications Commission Chairman Reed E. Hundt (Correspondence, January 23) for demonstrating the intellectual two-step propping up "inclusion" programs. Because women and minorities and "small businesses" may, as aggregate groups, "have serious difficulties obtaining capital," it stands to follow that all women and minorities need bid less to prevail at an FCC spectrum-license auction. A white man experiencing similar difficulty is excluded. The operative factor, then, is not inability to attract capital but race and gender.

As a decidedly not well-to-do "pale male," I perceive today's politics as a choice between the party that wants to give my boss a tax cut and the party that believes I should bear the burden of curing our social ills. The Republicans are at least doing their job. When Democrats discriminate against us working-class schlubs, there's something wrong.

MICHAEL JAY FRIEDMAN
Parsippany, New Jersey

Mouths of babes

To the editors:
When my 4-year-old granddaughter saw the caricature of Newt Gingrich on the cover of your January 23 issue, she made this innocent but prophetic remark: "Why is his head so big, and where is he running to so fast?"

FLOYD PEARSON
Golden Valley, Minnesota

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THE NEW REPUBLIC

FEBRUARY 20, 1995

"BARNEY FAG"

What if the words uttered by the House Majority Leader, Dick Armey, in his famous slip of the tongue last weekend, had been "Barney Kike"? Would the affair have lasted a couple of news cycles and received minor billing four days later in a *Washington Post* editorial? Would Newt Gingrich have felt it okay to say nothing about the incident? Or take another possibility. What if, in another Freudian circumlocution, Armey had called Kweisi Mfume "Kweisi Mnigger"? Would Armey still be majority leader?

We raise these parallels not because we think verbal bigotry should disqualify someone from public office (or should be legally sanctioned in any way), but because they reveal an interesting truth about the current acceptability of various prejudices. It's still essentially fine in most of America to refer to homosexual men as "fags" (and lesbians as "dykes"), while it is not essentially fine to use the terms "kikes" and "niggers." Armey's defense that he did not use the term "fag" in this context, that he was conflating the words "Frank" and "harangue," is, to put it mildly, unconvincing. No, he did not, as *The New York Times* suggested, "intentionally" say those words. The utterance was a gaffe, which, as followers of our colleague Michael Kinsley know, occurs precisely when someone in Washington tells the truth. When Armey thinks of Frank, he thinks "fag." Most of the time politicians manage to avoid saying what they think, but every so often, they don't. This time, as on many previous occasions, Armey didn't.

Of course, Armey's defense would be more persuasive if he had a record of toleration for homosexuals. But—guess what?—in the past three Congresses, Armey has voted for every anti-homosexual law or amendment that has come up; and he has voted against every legislative initiative that could conceivably be said to further the equality or dignity of gay Americans. No, these things should not be a litmus test; but they are oddly revealing.

In the 101st Congress, Armey was one of only forty-seven members who voted against George Bush's Hate Crime Statistics Act, which allowed the government merely to record violence against homosexuals (Gingrich, who's no bigot on these matters, voted for it). Armey voted not to block an amendment that would have required states to report the names of people who are HIV-positive; and he voted to exclude people with AIDS from the Americans with Disabilities Act. In the 102nd Congress, he voted to stop groups that boycotted the Boy Scouts of America (because the Scouts won't hire homosexuals) from receiving government funds. In the 103rd Congress, Armey voted to codify the "Don't Ask, Don't Tell" policy against gay military personnel; and he won't sign a voluntary statement saying his own office doesn't discriminate against homosexuals. In all these actions, he can seek no legitimate refuge behind arguments about states' rights, or free speech, or public health. His record places him in a select group of around ten die-hard members. *No one* in the House has a more anti-gay record.

The simple truth is, Richard Armey clearly has a thing about homosexuals. He evidently believes they are depraved human beings who engage in immoral behavior, which should be stopped or discouraged. Why will he not admit this? He thinks homosexuals should be hunted down and discharged from the military, subjected to mandatory testing if they contract a virus and actively discriminated against in the workplace and many voluntary organizations. Why on earth *wouldn't* such a person use the term "fag"? It would at least render his rhetoric consistent with his beliefs.

Armey's furious self-exoneration, on the floor of the House and in national newspapers, was perhaps the saddest part of the entire exercise. He does not even have the courage of his own convictions. It is as if somewhere deep in his heart he knows that what he believes is shameful, which is why he rejects so adamantly the suggestion that he believes it. But he does believe it. And he legislates it. Armey and his cohorts have asked us to judge them not by their words but by their actions. Sorry, Dick, but you lose either way. •

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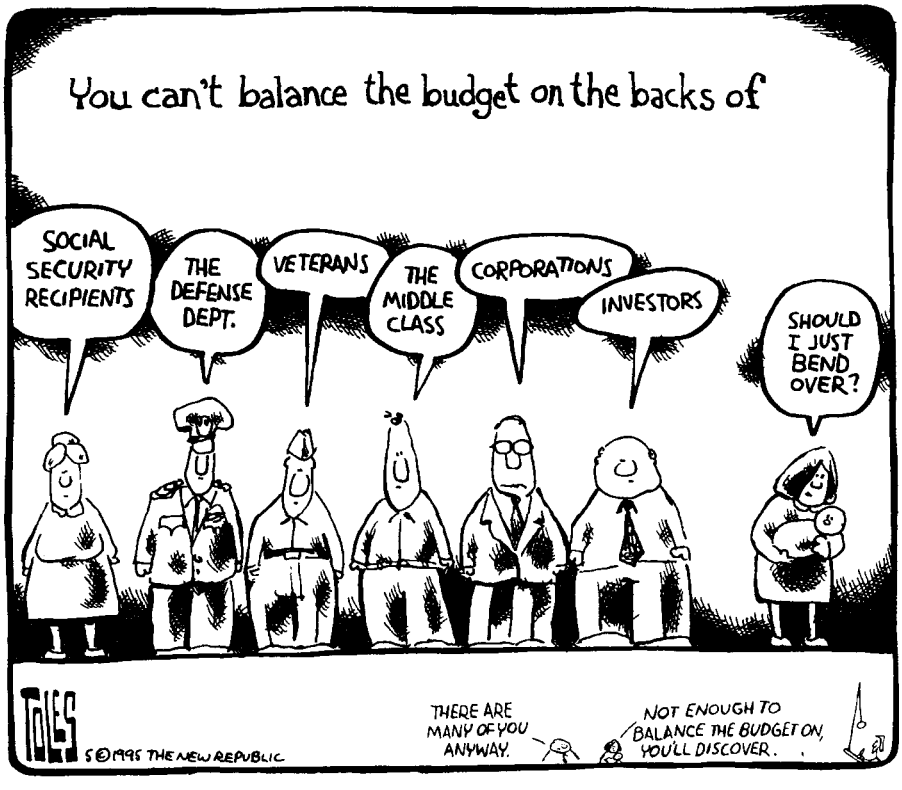
NOTEBOOK

SIC TRANSIT: The president gave a seventy-eight-minute State of the Union address, during which he was interrupted by chants of "Newt! Newt! Newt!" Ohio liquor control agents received complaints about three male strippers, including a 75-year-old, who made physical contact with patrons, simulated sex acts and exposed bare buttocks while dancing for a Women's Auxiliary of the Veterans of Foreign Wars. Spraggs, Pennsylvania, school officials asked bus driver Mary Burke to stop leading prayers and distributing religious materials while driving children to school. House Speaker Newt Gingrich said he would not evict members of Congress who live in their offices. The Ku Klux Klan won the right to participate in Ohio's Adopt-a-Highway litter clean-up program. Boston court officials began videotaping court appearances of men arrested for soliciting prostitutes so they could broadcast pictures of the convicted men on the city's cable station. Austin, Texas, police officials tried to give away 1,000 pairs of used brown polyester sheriffs' pants and 500 matching polyester shirts after failing to find anyone willing to pay for them. Bill Clinton's horoscope said, "Who says you can't sing!"



THESE JUST IN:

Republican districts more affluent and homogeneous

—*Bozeman Daily Chronicle*, January 2

Shootings at Clinics Were Anti-Life Acts

—*Chicago Sun-Times*, January 2

(Thanks to Tom Bozeman, of Bozeman, Montana, and Gerald Gruzin, of Chicago, Illinois.)

WHERE THERE'S A WILL: You might be forgiven for thinking George Will is foursquare against state-sponsored cultural agencies such as the Corporation for Public Broadcasting and the National Endowments for the Arts and Humanities. After all, it was only recently—in a January 11 column—that he thundered: "If Republicans merely trim rather than terminate these three agencies, they will affirm that all three perform appropriate federal functions and will prove that the Republican 'revolution' is not even serious reform." But this position is a relatively recent one. In a May 1991 *Washington Post* column about Gertrude Himmelfarb's Jefferson Lecture, sponsored by the NEH, Will was moved to declare that venerable institution "the best part of the government," an accolade that would make even defenders of the beleaguered agency blush. Mysteriously, while the Jefferson Lecture column is reproduced in his recent anthology, *The Leveling Wind*, it appears without his unequivocal endorsement of the NEH. Hmmm.

TOP TEN COLLEAGUES DICK ARMEY WON'T GREET BY NAME:

10. Norm Dicks
9. Daniel Akaka
8. Mike Crapo
7. Mel Hancock
6. John Boehner
5. Chris Cox
4. Harry Reid
3. Jay Dickey
2. Carlos Moorhead
1. Dick Swett

(Thanks to the mischievous staff of *Roll Call*.)

AND HE'S NOT THE ONLY ONE WITH PRONUNCIATION TROUBLES: When Senator Jesse Helms, reading from prepared testimony, denounced

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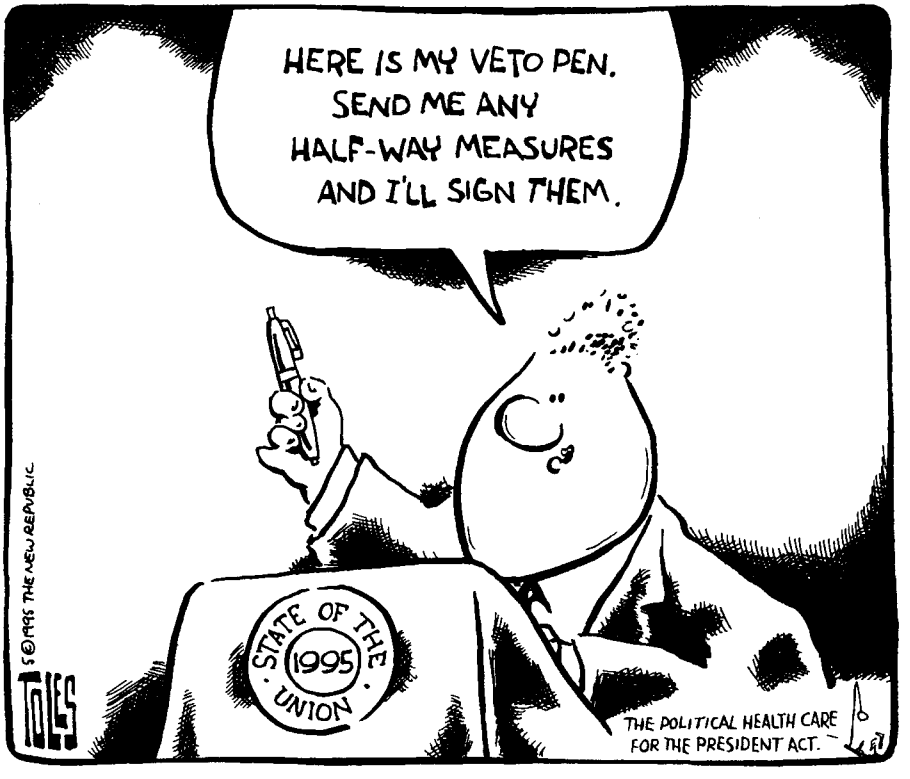
the malfeasance of North Korean President Kim Jong Il by referring to him as "Kim Jong Two" during hearings on January 25, his staffers flinched in embarrassment. In scripting Helms's statements for the following day, they helpfully spelled the North Korean leader's name phonetically: Kim Jong *Ill.* Imagine their chagrin when it came time for Helms to testify. "If this is not a treaty and it is not an executive agreement, what the heck is it?" wondered the new chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee. "We are entitled to know the nature of President Clinton's commitment to North Korean dictator Kim Jong the Third."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STATE OF THE UNION 1995
THE POLITICAL HEALTH CARE FOR THE PRESIDENT ACT.
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TOLES

UNENTITLED: Sadly, the promising Bipartisan Commission on Entitlement and Tax Reform was forced by the new Congress to shut its doors at 5 p.m., January 31. But the spartan warriors didn't leave without a final battle cry: "The government must take *immediate* action" to cut costs and stop relying on "gimmickry." They urged their colleagues, "We must lead by example." If the commission is our model, we're heading for huge deficits. To publicize their findings, they distributed an elaborate publicity packet—including a copy of the report itself, a slick blue CD-ROM and "Budget Shadows," a computer game that simulates the budget-cutting process—to an exclusive audience of 6,000 members of Congress, journalists, CEOs and political science professors. The final report was originally estimated at sixty pages, but, after adding last-minute congratulations from the Honorable Chris Cox, the Honorable John D. Dingell, etc., etc., it ballooned into a 265-page thick, glossy, multicolor tome. These extras tripled the original cost estimate to about $300,000, bringing the total for the project to at least half a million. Next time, save the swan song for the Internet.

DON'T GIVE JANE ALEXANDER IDEAS: Generally speaking, we're all in favor of creative efforts to highlight the short-sightedness of censorship. But, in the case of Marc Roberts, an alderman from Aurora, Illinois, we have more pity than admiration. On January 19, *The Chicago Sun-Times* reported that Roberts came up with a means of drawing attention to the problem of trying to sanction "city-approved graffiti" that was a tad too provocative. According to the *Sun-Times*, "Roberts, 41, gave colleagues at a planning meeting a manila envelope containing four color nude photos of himself taken at a North Carolina beach in 1976, one showing him climbing a lifeguard's tower and one showing him sitting with his legs apart." Not only did Roberts fail to convince his colleagues, but they also decided to voted to censure him. To make matters more bizarre, one of the votes for censure was cast by Roberts himself. "I voted in favor of it," he told the *Sun-Times*. "We all make mistakes." Several female aldermen expressed outrage at Roberts's actions, and the city is now considering whether to charge him with sexual harassment.

THIN-SKINNED: Two weeks ago Anna Husarska profiled Haitian Justice Minister Ernst Mallebranche in TNR, calling him, among other things, "intolerant," "clownish" and "not distinguished . . . in any other way." A headline in *The New York Times*, January 26: "HAITI'S JUSTICE MINISTER RESIGNS UNDER CRITICISM." Touchy, touchy.

WAIT, THERE'S MORE:

Study Shows Most Buses In City Fail to Run on Time

—*The New York Times*, December 17, 1994

FREE ADVICE

Bundle up when out in the cold

—*Lexington Herald-Leader*, January 26

(Thanks to Marc Rifkin of Beverly Hills, California, and the warm and toasty Alan Purcell of Lexington, Kentucky, respectively.) •

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Inside the liberal conspiracy.

THE DEFECTOR

By Michael Lind

The liberal establishment, understandably disconsolate, has decided to pick off vulnerable conservatives. *The New York Review of Books* got an ex-conservative, Michael Lind, to do a hit on Pat Robertson. Lind picks a vulnerable spot indeed: Robertson's best-selling book, *The New World Order*, which details the nefarious doings of a conspiracy of international bankers over more than two centuries.... Why, Lind keens, haven't conservatives expelled Robertson and the Christian Coalition from their ranks?

—*National Review*, February 6

Yes, it's true. I sold out to the Liberal Establishment. Or rather—I was tapped.

Here's how it happened: one night, returning to my modest studio apartment in Manhattan, I found a mysterious message on my answering machine. "Do you want wealth and power beyond your wildest dreams?" said a weird, electronically modulated voice, which proceeded to tell me to visit a certain address at midnight. Wealth, power ... what the heck? I thought.

I began to have second thoughts when I showed up at the address—a run-down tenement on a deserted street in Greenwich Village. After I rang and identified myself, the door buzzed and opened. Only after I stepped into the elevator did I realize there were no floor numbers. By then it was too late; the doors had shut and the elevator was descending rapidly.

Deep beneath Manhattan, the elevator came to a stop. I stepped into a marble corridor modeled on the Hall of Mirrors at Versailles. At the end of the corridor, ornate doors swung open. I stepped into a gallery that looked into a cold glass and steel chamber in the shape of an amphitheater. Men and women wearing solemn expressions and designer clothes were sitting at desks arranged in concentric tiers around a throne. There a hooded figure sat, immersed in shadow. Clearly I had come upon a convocation of great importance.

"Number Sixteen," the hooded figure said, in the electronically disguised voice that had left the message on my phone. "Report."

A man stood. To my amazement, I recognized him—Norman Lear! "Thank you, Number One," said the producer of "All in the Family" and the founder of People for the American Way. "Operation Liberal Media Blitz is proceeding on schedule. We are on the verge of compelling the new cable channels, as well as the networks, to be vehicles of our subliminal anti-family, anti-patriotic propaganda."

"Well done, Number Sixteen," said the electronic voice. "Number Nine."

Number Nine was a woman. "Thank you, Number One. Operation Welfare Dependency has met its major goals for the year. A record number of Americans are dependent on handouts from Big Government. Soon the population will become completely dependent on the state—permitting our Liberal New Class to become the unchallenged masters of the country."

"You have neglected to mention one thing, Number Nine," the hooded figure responded. Number Nine visibly began to tremble.

"Your assignment was government seizure of one-fifth of the U.S. economy," Number One went on. "Socialized medicine was to have been the final prelude to our takeover. But you allowed William Kristol to expose our plot by sending around memos saying there is no health care crisis. Number Nine, you know that the Liberal Establishment does not tolerate failure."

Number Nine waved her arms in desperation. "Health care reform is not dead yet.... We just need a little more time...." Suddenly a panel in front of her slid open, revealing a well with crocodiles writhing at the bottom. The desk behind her tilted and knocked her in. The panel, sliding shut, cut off the horrendous screams. The other operatives shifted uncomfortably in their seats.

Let that be a lesson to the rest of you. In our attempt to destroy family values and Western civilization, we face brilliant and implacable foes—Newt Gingrich, Bill Bennett, Rush Limbaugh, Lynne Cheney, various Kristols and Podhoretzes, and the most powerful and cunning of them all, *The American Spectator*'s R. Emmett Tyrrell. Our plan to capture the culture and plunge America into a New Dark Age cannot succeed unless we have an All-Star Team."

At this, a spotlight shone upon me. The hooded figure turned its attention to the gallery where I stood.

"Michael Lind," said the electronically modulated voice. "If you are willing to become a mercenary for the Liberal Establishment, the rewards shall be great." The mysterious figure mentioned a few: use of a Lear jet, an unlimited subscription to *The New York Times* and free tickets to all NEA events.

My voice cracked, as I asked, "What if I refuse?"

"Remember what happened to Vince Foster." I gulped.

"Henceforth, you shall be known only as Number Nine. You shall receive your instructions in the form of coded messages taped in reverse in the music sections of "All Things Considered." The next thing that Number One said was in a female voice no longer camouflaged by electronic masking. "Welcome to the club, Mr. Lind."

Number One threw back her hood to reveal her true identity. I gasped. Hillary!

After the conclave, a small welcoming party was held

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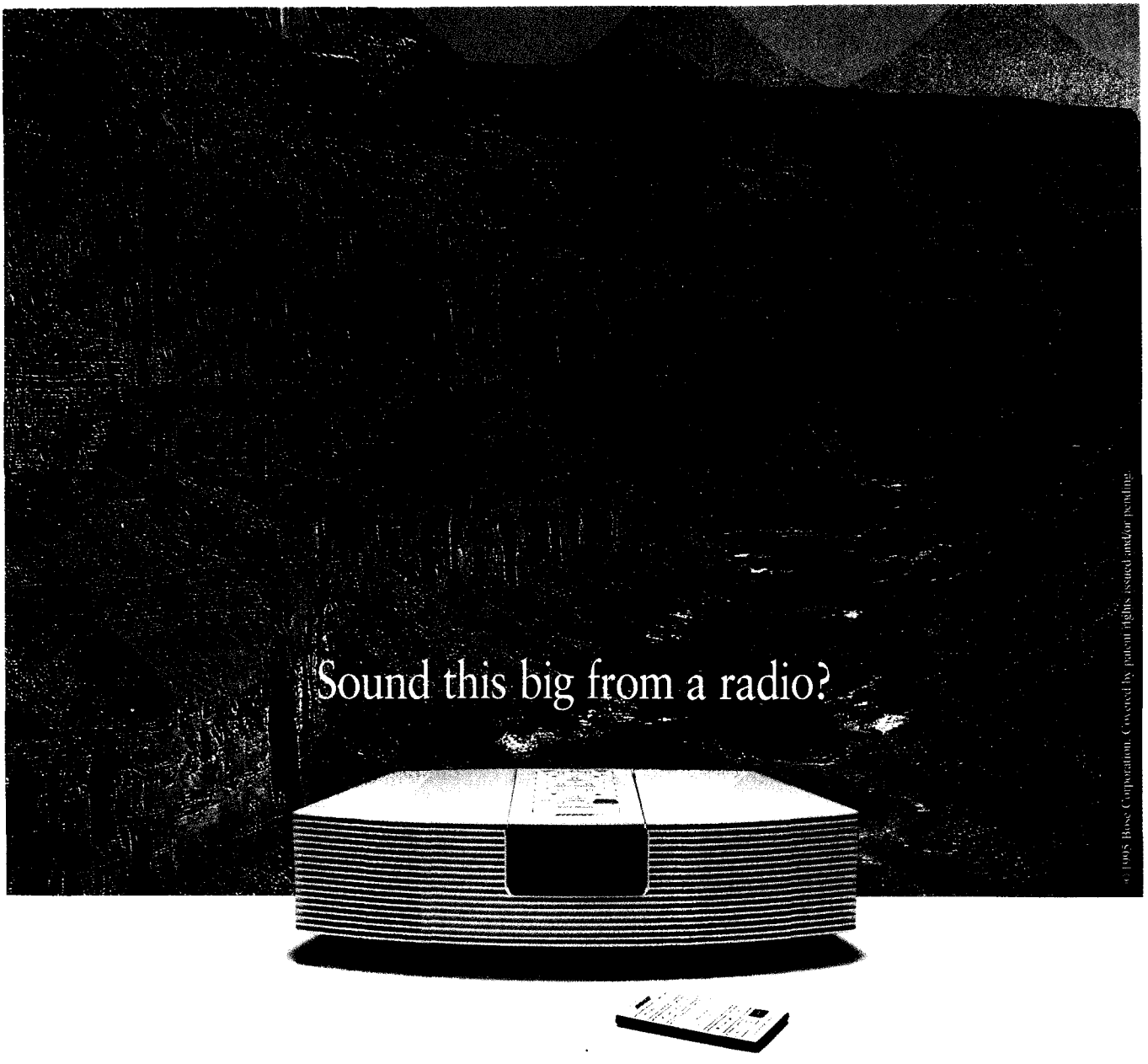

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for me in the smoke-free Alger Hiss Banquet Hall. Here, dining on Belgian endive beneath gold-framed portraits of Anthony Lewis and Barbra Streisand, I met all the members of the Liberal Establishment—Jim Lehrer and Peter Jennings, Bill Moyers and Barney Frank, Mario Cuomo and Dan Rather and Marian Wright Edelman.

I was then given my first assignment—a hit on Pat Robertson. "We've been working on some toys we think you'll like, Number Nine," I was told by the leader of the R&D section of the Liberal Establishment, a fellow known only as "K" whom I recognized as TNR's Michael Kinsley. "K" led me through an underground gallery where liberal operatives were practicing their nefarious arts. Here, a Big Government bureaucrat was cracking a safe while two hard-working citizens, bound and gagged, looked on; there, U.N. Blue Helmets were disarming U.S. soldiers and members of the NRA in duck-hunting garb. In the cubicle next door, gay rights activists were teaching sadomasochism to 5-year-olds. "This is my personal favorite," said "K," pausing to watch as an operative dressed like a businessman aimed what appeared to be a cellular phone at a U.S. flag. The Stars and Stripes burst into flames.

"Very amusing," chuckled "K." "Come along, now. Agent Ninety-Nine is waiting."

Agent Ninety-Nine, it turned out, was none other than Jane Fonda. "You were expecting Barbara Felden?" she said. "Call me Hanoi Jane."

MICHAEL LIND is a senior editor of *Harper's Magazine.*

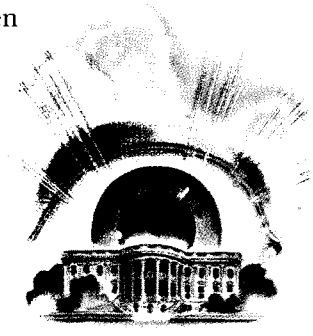
WHITE HOUSE WATCH

WHERE'S THE PARTY?

By Fred Barnes

The White House summit on welfare reform on January 28 was disjointed, meandering and long (nearly six hours)—in a word, Clinton-esque. As usual, both Clinton and Vice President Al Gore stayed to the bitter end. The president asked question after question, and Republicans did most of the answering, notably Representative Clay Shaw of Florida, the GOP leader on welfare reform. Congressional Democrats didn't say much, except Senator Barbara Mikulski of Maryland, who declared that social workers should be called "empowerment workers." At the close, Clinton said consensus had been reached on the need for state flexibility on welfare and for national standards for child support. Then, he noted that Shaw was already moving a welfare reform bill through the House. So he anointed Shaw point man on the issue, urging everyone to cooperate with him. "The ball's in Clay Shaw's court," the president said.

Clinton is a president without a party. He latched onto Shaw, a conservative Republican, because no Democrat has stepped forward as Clinton's champion on welfare reform, or on most other issues. Shaw was amazed. House Republican leaders—Speaker Newt Gingrich, Majority Leader Dick Armey, etc.—were just as thunderstruck when Shaw told them two days later about the session with the president. Democrats at the summit, including House Minority Leader Richard Gephardt and Senator Ted Kennedy, raised no objection. Most of them hadn't liked Clinton's welfare reform bill, which was sent to Congress last year. Democratic moderates, two dozen at most, preferred the president's plan, but no one has sponsored it this year. No need. By signing up with Shaw, Clinton signaled that his plan (a welfare cut-off after two years, followed by a government-created job if no private one is available) is dead. For Clinton, Shaw is a port in a storm; any port will do. Shaw's bill is many Democrats' worst nightmare: welfare would cease to be an entitlement and federal welfare programs would be turned over to the states.



By my reckoning, no president in decades has had as little clout with his own party in Congress as Clinton does now. George Bush in 1992? Jimmy Carter in 1979? They had congressional followers, though not many. But there's simply no Clinton constituency at all in Congress. This is harmful to him in ways that don't involve legislation. One of the talents most presidents have is for turning on the Washington echo chamber. The president speaks and his allies in Congress echo his words for days. With Clinton, there's no echo. For sure, Democrats didn't provide one after his State of the Union address on January 24. It was Republicans who complimented the speech for its conservative tack. Jay Leno said the address should have been followed by a Democratic rebuttal.

The State of the Union did nothing to wash away the residue of the 1994 elections. Democrats blame Clinton for causing the party disastrous losses. They think he's responsible for reducing them to minority status. Clinton and his aides believe, correctly, that congressional Democrats are in denial, refusing to recognize their own role in the party's defeat. If only they had reformed Congress, they might still run the place, says a senior Clinton adviser. In any case, the estrangement is palpable. The White House used to send representatives to House Democratic caucuses, whip meetings and the daily message meeting. Now White House officials show up infrequently. "There's not much coordination," says a House Democrat.

Events have made relations rockier. Gephardt up-

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Where We Stand

By Albert Shanker, President
American Federation of Teachers

Debating the Standards

A few weeks ago, members of the U.S. Senate put aside their disagreements and, in a remarkable show of unity, voted 99 to 1 to pass a sense of the Senate resolution. The resolution and debate got very little media attention, and that's too bad because the senators were talking about something that is vitally important to all of us. They were debating the kind of history our children should learn and, specifically, the validity of the standards for American and world history that were recently proposed as models under Goals 2000.

Senators were concerned to see that the proposed history standards tend to diminish our country's accomplishments instead of encouraging youngsters to take pride in them. They did not demand that history standards ignore or whitewash the mistakes the U.S. has made; they were calling for a reasonable balance between our country's achievements in creating uniquely democratic institutions and our failures to live up to our ideals. And senators with views as different as Paul Wellstone and Phil Gramm were in agreement about this.

I agree with the senators, too. Telling the truth about our warts does not mean ignoring our successes in securing rights and freedoms for our citizens—or trivializing important battles we have fought on behalf of our ideals. I'm thinking, for example, about the treatment of the Cold War. The history standards call this conflict "swordplay" between two great powers—as if the whole struggle were nothing but a duel between equals, and a rather quaint one at that. They talk about U.S. "interference" in many parts of the world, but the only moral argument that comes up in connection with the Cold War is leveled against McCarthyism rather than the former Soviet Union. And a reader of the standards who didn't know better would undoubtedly conclude that anyone who was an anti-Communist was also a McCarthyite.

The history standards are not an argument against Goals 2000 and its standards-setting process; they are a vindication.

Another problem with the proposed standards is in what they expect students to know and be able to do. The introduction says the standards will "promote active questioning and learning rather than passive absorption of facts, dates and names." Now, nobody thinks that rote learning is all that history should be, but this statement denigrates the acquiring of facts, dates and names, which are a basic part of historical knowledge. How can youngsters engage in "historical thinking"—one of the announced goals—without this knowledge? The problem with many youngsters today is not that they don't have opinions but that they don't have facts on which to base their opinions.

However, it is important to keep in mind that these are one group's proposed standards. Under Goals 2000, states—not independent groups and not the federal government—determine what standards their students will be expected to reach. As a way of providing guidance to states that seek it, Goals 2000 has created a review process for certifying high-quality standards. The proposed history standards would probably have failed this review anyway. But even if a set of proposed standards earns certification, states can debate the standards and modify and use them in any way they choose —or ignore them if they see fit.

There are critics who say that just having standards around with a Good Housekeeping Seal of Approval, which is what certification amounts to, would make them dangerous. They fear that some states or school districts—and probably textbook publishers— would simply accept and use these standards without question. So some senators and other critics now want to junk not only the history standards but the whole idea of national standards and the process of standard-setting called for by Goals 2000.

That's a bad idea. Goals 2000 offers a mechanism for setting high standards against which we can measure what U.S. students know and are able to do. Our education system needs this if we hope to raise the achievement levels of all our students. Furthermore, getting rid of the standards process will not save students from being exposed to the kind of stuff we see in the history standards.

There are already lots of curriculum materials around and in use that are as bad as the history standards—and worse. If you toss out the standards-setting process, the biases we see in the proposed history standards will end up in other textbooks and curriculums that will be adopted on a school-by-school basis and used by kids all over the country. The difference is, there will be no public debate and few people will notice.

The Goals 2000 process makes sure that the standards our kids are expected to meet are debated out in the open—the way they were in Congress—instead of behind closed doors. As a result, we will end up with a much better and more honest set of standards than we could possibly get without the process. The history standards are not an argument against Goals 2000 and the standards-setting process; they are a vindication.

Mr. Shanker's comments appear in this ad under the auspices of the American Federation of Teachers. Reader correspondence is invited. Address your letters to Mr. Shanker at the AFT, 555 New Jersey Avenue, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20001. © 1995 by Albert Shanker.

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staged Clinton in December by announcing his plan for a tax cut two days before the president went on national T.V. to unveil his own, "the middle-class bill of rights." In his speech, Gephardt said: "We'll work as closely as we can with the president and with our colleagues in the Senate. But our agenda will come from America's houses, not the White House." Gephardt mentioned Clinton by name only once in his speech and then only in passing. Though irritated, Clinton called Gephardt to congratulate him on the tax proposal. Another source of friction was the White House decision not to name Representative Robert Torricelli of New Jersey as Democratic national chairman. Some Democrats insisted the White House, especially Gore, was fearful of having an ally of Gephardt in the job, Gephardt being a potential challenger for the 1996 Democratic presidential nomination.

Even more than welfare reform, the proposed $40 billion loan guarantee to Mexico revealed Clinton's minimal influence on congressional Democrats. Clinton got Gephardt and Senate Minority Leader Tom Daschle to sign on, along with Gingrich and Senate Majority Leader Bob Dole. But that was the extent of the Democratic effort. Gephardt's assistant, House Democratic Whip David Bonior, noisily opposed the bailout. Hearing that the loan guarantee was probably doomed in the Senate, Gephardt never went to the trouble of conducting a vote count among House Democrats. Gingrich did considerably more, despite the absence of Republican sympathy for the bailout. He spoke out in favor of it and was prepared to pressure House Republicans to vote for it—until Clinton let him off the hook on January 31 by using executive authority to stabilize the Mexican peso.

Clinton's decision to jettison the loan guarantee came after he and his aides spent several days lobbying House members. They made virtually no headway. Earlier, Republicans had complained that Gephardt's negotiators on the guarantee legislation, Representative Barney Frank of Massachusetts and Alan Mollohan of West Virginia, had done nothing to win votes. Even after Gingrich warned that Republicans would abandon Clinton if a sizable number of Democrats didn't endorse the bailout, practically no Democrats came forward. Nor did they after Clinton's plea for support in the State of the Union. "This legislation is right for America," he said, "and I call on Congress to pass it quickly." This line drew no applause.

On taxes and health care, Clinton has more backing among Republicans on Capitol Hill than Democrats. Gephardt wants a cut in taxes for those earning less than $75,000. He doesn't favor singling out children for a tax credit, as Clinton and Republicans do. And he doesn't care for Clinton's scheme of making college tuition tax deductible. On health care, Gingrich and Dole instantly accepted Clinton's call in the State of the Union for "meaningful insurance reform." And why not? This has been their goal all along. Democrats? They've been silent. Democratic leaders haven't decided whether they like Clinton's "step-by-step" approach to health care reform or want to stick with comprehensive reform, as Clinton sought in vain in 1994. Boosting the minimum wage is probably the only bit of Democratic dogma on which Clinton and congressional Democrats will join forces against Republicans.

But that's later this year. For now, Clinton is adrift in Washington and off his game. Normally he's a political charmer, but his geniality dissolved when he addressed the Alfalfa Club dinner on January 28. Alfalfa speeches are supposed to be funny, not serious. Clinton knew this, having attended the dinner in 1994. Still, he was serious. Former Secretary of State James Baker had said his competition in speaking would be Clinton. "And Mr. President, I don't think it's fair to compare your State of the Union speech with Chinese water torture. Most people can't sleep through Chinese water torture." Clinton took umbrage. He said it wasn't surprising that Baker didn't like the State of the Union speech. It was about "real problems and real people." Real Democrats wandered over to Baker afterward to commiserate. •

NATIONAL INSECURITY

WHO LOST MEXICO?

By Charles Lane

Faced with defeat in Congress, Bill Clinton has withdrawn his $40 billion loan guarantee for Mexico. Instead, he acted by executive order, plucking $20 billion from a Treasury fund normally used to prop up the dollar on international currency markets. Coming from Clinton, it's a refreshingly bold exercise of presidential prerogative. It may even rescue Mexico's economy, or at least the parts of other nations' economies—including our own—that depend on Mexican trade. Then again, it may not. As the unproud owner of fifty shares of Teléfonos de México, I can only wish the venture well.

In foreign policy terms, however, any victory Clinton may have gained is a pyrrhic one. The slender majority of free-trade Republicans and loyal Democrats he forged when Congress narrowly approved the North American Free Trade Agreement fifteen months ago—the high-water mark of post-cold war internationalism—is clearly no more. There are no longer Republicans or Democrats when it comes to foreign policy. Instead, the debate pits internationalists such as Clinton, Bob Dole and Newt Gingrich against a neo-nationalist cabal of anti-foreign aid Republicans and

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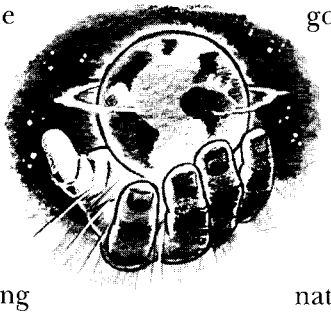
protectionist left-wing Democrats. And the nationalists have the upper hand: having successfully revolted against their party leaders to stop the loan guarantees, they are unlikely to back down in future fights. "This is the first complete rout of the governing elite since the League of Nations went down to defeat," crowed Pat Buchanan.

Leave it to Pat Buchanan to hail a decision that paved the way for an isolationist America's indifference to the rise of Hitler. Still, nationalists won this fight because they had a point: NAFTA wasn't supposed to lead to the most expensive federal bailout of a foreign country ever. In political terms, too, the critics' logic was unbeatable. If we can bail out Mexico, why can't we bail out Orange County? Clinton's plea also lacked economic credibility. Having initially underreacted to the peso devaluation, the Clinton administration then exaggerated the catastrophe that would ensue if its $40 billion plan failed. In fact, economists estimated that the difference between passage and defeat might have been only 300,000 U.S. jobs—about the number the economy creates each month already.

The real question, then, is whether the Clinton plan will solve Mexico's chronic financial problems or wind up as just the latest in a long cycle of bigger and bigger American rescues. As James Grant of *Grant's Interest Rate Observer* has shown, Mexico has devalued the peso every six years for the past two decades—in 1976, 1982, 1988 and 1994. Consequently, the United States has been propping up Mexico for the past dozen years. Contrary to myth, Presidents Reagan and Bush never seriously considered letting the market work its ruthless discipline on either Mexico or the country's Wall Street underwriters. Rather, they pursued an interventionist strategy of pressuring Mexico to open its markets and reduce the role of the state in the economy; federally sponsored easy credits, the repackaging of Latin debt as U.S.-backed Brady Bonds and NAFTA were proffered as inducements.



This strategy was hardly a failure. Mexico balanced its budget, lowered inflation to single-digit levels, sold off state-run companies and opened up its one-party political system far more than many thought possible. The presidential election in August 1994 was probably the cleanest one Mexico has ever held. Still, Mexico is not "fundamentally sound," as its government and ours insist. It won't be until the underlying political causes of its periodic profligacy have been rooted out. Return for a moment to Grant's cycle of default, devaluation and bailout. Note how it coincides precisely with the schedule of Mexican presidential elections. The reason is simple: Mexico's not-so-popular leaders have learned that they can play politics with their hard currency reserves, bribing voters with carefully timed periods of false prosperity.

NAFTA may even have exacerbated this problem, at least in the short run. Mexico overvalued the peso in 1993 and 1994 to produce an investment and consumption boom financed by American capital; the artificially healthy appearance of the Mexican economy helped shore up political support for the agreement on both sides of the border. Even more brazenly, outgoing President Carlos Salinas was trying to pump up his own chances to get elected president of the new World Trade Organization. Pleased that NAFTA appeared to be generating a big flow of U.S. exports, the Clinton administration tolerated the shenanigans in Mexico City for too long.

Fortunately for Clinton, and for free trade, the anti-NAFTA nationalists don't offer a credible policy alternative. Democrats want to link U.S. help for Mexico to higher wages and labor standards in Mexico. Even if we could enforce such a decree, production would just go elsewhere—depriving Mexicans of jobs they'd be happy to have, and leaving U.S. workers under the same competitive pressure. On the right, Buchanan merely suggests a posse of Border Patrol agents to turn back illegal immigrants.

American nationalists say internationalist goals such as "collective security" and "free trade" are little more than "grandiose objectives that seem forever over the horizon," as Alan Tonelson of the protectionist Economic Strategy Institute puts it. In the long run, we are all dead; the end of the cold war means it's time to focus on our own immediate concerns.

This sounds hard-nosed, but the internationalists are actually the realists in this debate. Interdependence is not just an abstract concept but a fact of global life. So is the need to shape policy to the conditions and interests of other nations, and for them to reciprocate. Mutual concessions of sovereignty such as trade agreements that lower tariffs on both sides of the border ease the inevitable interaction between our societies. Fencing off Latin America is a mean-spirited pipe dream. Regional integration will happen anyway. It's more efficient (and more humane) to put Mexicans to work in U.S.-owned textile mills in Mexico than it is to spend millions on border agents to keep them out of California—or to subsidize a higher-cost textile mill in South Carolina.

The problem with NAFTA and Clinton's bailout is not that they go too far. The risk is that they won't go far enough. The cross-border seepage of American money, ideas and practices set in motion forces that upset Mexico's one-party pseudo-democracy. But it didn't actually replace the old system with a more legitimate one. There are anti-NAFTA guerrillas roaming Chiapas, and the ruling party's reformers and "dinosaurs" are tearing each other apart. Mexico's leaders still keep vital financial data virtually secret and can spend their reserves for their political benefit. Their most valuable asset, oil, remains off-limits to foreign investors.

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In effect, Clinton's action has bought the Mexicans one more chance to get their house in order—under more favorable financial conditions than their record thus far suggests they deserve. But there is still time to exploit the current crisis to finish what NAFTA began. Far more significant than the size of a bailout now are institutional changes to ensure better, stabler economic policies in the future—and so no more bailouts. But thus far, Clinton is settling for little more than promises. Spooked by his own exaggeratedly dire forecasts about the economic fallout of the Mexican collapse, and by the equally hyped threat of backlash from Mexico's nationalist minority, he hasn't insisted on solid guarantees—such as a currency board—that would compel Mexico to keep the peso sound.

A closer relationship with Mexico might take a nick out of American sovereignty. But it will require far more change and sacrifice from the Mexicans than from us. Only rarely do countries depend on each other to exactly the same degree, and, contrary to nationalist complaints, the balance of dependency usually favors the huge, powerful economy of the United States. If, as is certainly the case, Mexico needs us more than we need them, this increases our leverage. Either Bill Clinton uses it to wrench Mexico into more responsible governance or, in the long run, the NAFTA dream will be dead. •

Why prison murders go unnoticed.

VERY EX-CONS

By Andy Lamey

Jeffrey Dahmer was lucky. When he was murdered in prison, someone noticed. The media interest in his death was so acute that the Department of Justice rushed out its annually released statistics on prison deaths several months ahead of schedule. But further inquiries about inmate homicides yield only the sketchiest of answers. When I asked a Virginia prison official for the names of recent victims, I was told, "All I have is numbers"—meaning I.D. numbers. And, given the current state of prison record-keeping, it is often impossible to determine not only who has been murdered while incarcerated, but even how many murders have occurred.

The three leading authorities on prison statistics are: *Corrections Compendium*, a corrections industry journal; *The Corrections Yearbook*, a resource annual published by the Criminal Justice Institute, a corrections consulting firm; and the Department of Justice itself. All are widely consulted by prison and Justice officials. All three give different inmate homicide totals for 1993, the last year for which statistics are available. *Corrections Compendium* sent a questionnaire to all departments of corrections in the country. The forty-two systems that replied (forty states, the District of Columbia and the Federal Bureau of Prisons) reported a total of forty-seven killings. (Ten states didn't bother filling out the questionnaire.) The Criminal Justice Institute reported seventy-two homicides nationwide. The Justice Department's total is eighty-three.

Who's right? Take as a test case the corrections department in Washington, D.C. The District's Department of Corrections reports that three inmates in its custody were killed by other inmates in 1993. In the three national reports, only the Criminal Justice Institute number corresponds. *Corrections Compendium* puts the number at four. The Department of Justice simply doesn't keep track of D.C. inmate deaths. "D.C. doesn't have its own correctional facility," a department-contracted "information specialist" told me, overlooking the existence of D.C.'s 3,000-acre complex at Lorton, Virginia, home to 10,631 inmates.

Of course, the discrepancy might exist partly because ten states didn't participate in the *Corrections Compendium* survey. But even when those ten states are excluded from all three totals the results still vary. And leaving out *Corrections Compendium* altogether won't make the numbers match: according to the Justice Department, there were twenty-four inmate murders in New York prisons. According to CJI, three. What's more, none of these aggregate figures takes account of the large number of mystery deaths that occur in prisons each year; though their causes are officially classified as "unknown," these may well include unsolved or unreported murders. CJI, for example, gives a figure of thirty-eight deaths by unknown cause at Lorton. *Thirty-eight?*

Another unknown is the number of convictions for inmate murders. State records are nonexistent or buried beneath layers of bureaucracy. When I asked for California's conviction total, a spokesman for the state's correction system told me, "I don't know how I would get that. I'd have to find out what prisons they [the homicides] were in." A Florida official said, "It would take some doing. You'd have to call health services." And no one even attempts to track conviction rates for prison murders at the national level.

What happens in prisons is particularly salient these days given the vast number of Americans who live their lives behind bars. In the past thirteen years, the number of inmates in state and federal prisons has increased by 188 percent. When jail populations are added to the inmate total (jails, usually run by counties or cities, hold people awaiting trial or serving short sentences, while prisons hold convicted criminals), the number of prisoners tops 1 million. This is the largest prison population of any country in the world (with the probable exception of China, which does not release its prison statistics). By comparison,

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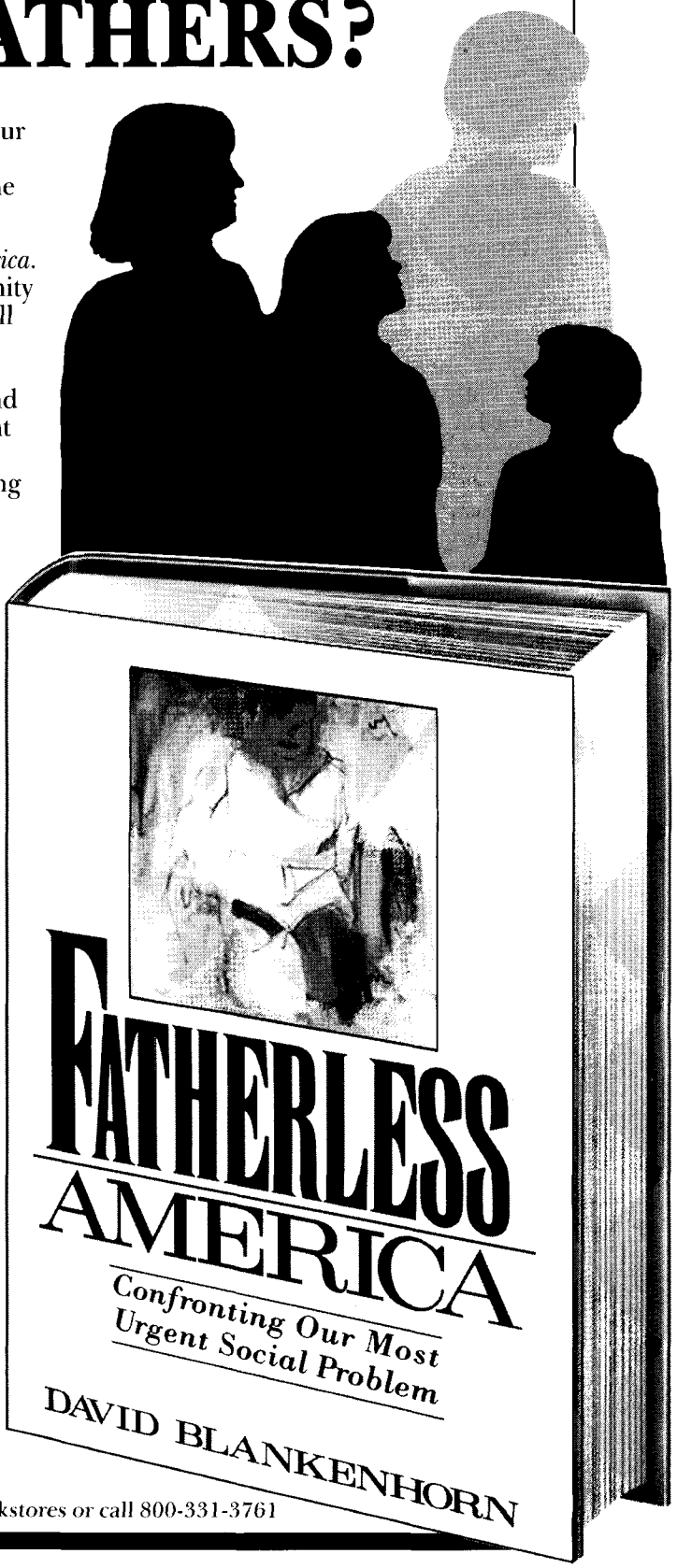

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India has a quarter of a million prisoners, out of a population three times that of the United States. According to Ed Rubin, a University of California law professor who is writing a book on prison reform, California's overcrowding problem has become so grave that the state has lost track of who goes to prison. Though it once kept a database of prisoners' demographic profiles, now, says Rubin, "you can't do a study of who creates dangerous situations in prison. The data isn't there."

Another reason for the missing persons problem is the anti-crime hysteria so prevalent among politicians. Unwilling to appear soft on crime, state legislatures rubber-stamp funding to build prisons—then run out of money to finish or operate them at minimum standards. Accurate record-keeping is one of the many victims of such shortfalls. In Virginia, for example, prison records break down only the overall number of inmate deaths—no names, no individual causes. The reason, explains Administrator Joanne Terlep, is budget cuts. "Without increased funding," she says, "we won't get [our administrative resources] into the '80s, let alone the '90s." So the system is forced to play catch-up with its ever-growing demands. And why are there no accurate figures on inmate murders? "No one cares," she says.

Indifference to the fate of inmates is hardly surprising, or new. According to Malcolm Feely, dean of law at the University of California, prisons were one of the last public services to come under bureaucratic control. "In some states the idea of a state correction system is still a relatively new idea. And there's still no central authority." Although Feely downplays the significance of the sloppy record-keeping—"this is hardly unique to prisons"—the problem is made worse by the fact that nobody is exactly clamoring for better accounting of prison casualties. Prisoners are like immigrants: they have no effective lobby. "Our experience is absolutely that record keeping is not adequate, review processes are not adequate," says Marti Hiken of the Prison Law Project in San Francisco. When I asked Luis Talmentes, a former convict now with the Pelican Bay Information Project, a prison watch group, to tell me about California's review process for inmate deaths, he said, "It's called Potter's Field. They take them and bury them."

Shoddy records can actually increase the likelihood of inmate violence, particularly in jails. According to a 1992 Human Rights Watch report on incarceration in the United States, "classification of inmates in jails is often deficient or nonexistent." As a result, prisoners with no prior record are frequently housed in the same cell or dorm with dangerous criminals. The report cites the 1989 case of Timothy Ryan, a New Jersey driver who couldn't post bail for motor vehicle violations and was sent to the Burlington County Jail. Among the nine other occupants of his cell was one Maurice Scott, a former prisoner with a history of violent attacks. Five days after Ryan arrived, Scott jumped him during a fight over food, broke his neck and left him a quadriplegic.

Of course, not every prison system is equally blameworthy. Nebraska, for example, conducts a grand jury inquiry whenever someone in custody dies. (This is not an overwhelming task since Nebraska has one of the lowest crime rates in the country.) On the whole, however, the record-keeping mess is not only embarrassing to the country's correctional system but grimly ironic, too. Convicts such as Dahmer whose crimes are both gruesome and notorious at least get a media send-off. The rest are fortunate to get a number. •

One woman's cautionary workfare tale.

JERKY BOYS

By Laurie Abraham

Back when Newt Gingrich was still learning the ropes of Congress, I was toiling in the fields of the last big federal jobs program. At its peak in 1978, the Comprehensive Employment and Training Act (CETA) program employed 750,000 workers—a number that looks downright puny compared with the 1.5 million welfare recipients the House Republicans plan to put to work by 2001. In the hope that Gingrich and his Congress won't legislate that program's mistakes, I thought I'd pass on a few general rules I learned in the crucible of CETA.

1. Set Consistent On-the-Job Drinking Policies

My job was to prod twenty disadvantaged 14- to 18-year-olds to pick up garbage on Cleveland's East Side. One other supervisor, also under 20, usually worked with me. We had a boss, a middle-age parks director, but he appeared maybe twice at the various sites where we labored.

Even though I occasionally felt intimidated by the older boys I supervised, they soon began addressing me by the nickname "Brubaker." My endless cajoling—"Get up, you can't pick up garbage from a bench"; "Gum wrappers count as trash, too"; "Please, please stay in the vicinity"—probably accounted for some of my prison warden reputation. But my gravest sin, to my 17- and 18-year-old charges, was my unwillingness to bribe them to work with six-packs.

The kids had good reason to believe that free-flowing booze was a fringe benefit of CETA employment. En route to the day's unlovely site, our overstuffed van routinely stopped at a grungy state liquor store. The driver, or one of the adult CETA employees who accompanied us, would tramp in and emerge a few minutes later, his step a little lighter, undoubtedly anticipating the mid-

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morning pick-me-up in his brown paper sack. But there wasn't much I could do about the adults' drinking, since, after all, I wasn't their boss.

One afternoon, however, my co-supervisor treated his crew to a round of beers. My group had been at their best that day, which meant they were wandering listlessly around a field, occasionally poking at a styrofoam cup. Suddenly, they dropped their tools; on the far side of the field they had spotted the rival crew members leaning on their rakes, sipping Buds. Naïvely, I decided I had to address the disparate working conditions. Which brings me to my next rule....

2. Don't Hire Volatile Misogynists to Supervise Youth

I approached my fellow supervisor, who was white—like me, and unlike our all-black work force—and asked him to stop buying beer for his group. That simple request pushed some Freudian button best left unexamined. Standing in the burned-out grass, cars whizzing past, he bellowed, "You bitch! I have twelve sisters, and they never tell me what to do. They know not to order me around. I'm not going to take orders from you or any other bitch!" This stocky pugilist pulled his glasses from his face and flung them to the ground, ready to fight to the finish.

The next thing I knew, a lanky 15-year-old knocked the guy down with the help of several of the brawnier boys. When the driver, Ned, came to retrieve us, the kids told him about the incident, and to my surprise he, too, took my side. Refusing to transport my would-be attacker to park headquarters, Ned forced him out of the van in a desolate black neighborhood—a tactic Ned knew would scare the pants off this young man from the white West Side. That was the last we ever saw of the jerk.

3. Don't Make Workers Cross-Cultural Guinea Pigs

One morning, while searching the park garage for our perpetually misplaced trash sticks and shovels, I heard the kids grousing about the park we were scheduled to clean. It was located in Cleveland's Little Italy, and my crew didn't want to "go hang out with no Godfathers." Indeed, the neighborhood was known as a dangerous one for blacks, and I understood the kids' point of view; why invite a confrontation over garbage collection when one of the whiter West Side crews could easily have done the job? Caution did not prevail, however, and as we drove up to the small park I noted that it was bounded by a semicircle of homes. "Keep a low profile," I instructed the kids. "*Don't* wander off."

Heeding my warnings in typical fashion, they soon were lying face-first on the ground. An old white guy had fired a rifle into the air. Two of our crew, it turned out, had jumped the man's fence and nabbed a couple of his tomatoes. The workers understandably refused to leave the pavilion where they had gathered for cover, and I hurried to find a pay phone to call for an early ride. When I returned, I, as the only white on the job, tentatively approached the fence where the gunman kept watch, retrieving rakes and nervously apologizing for the vegetable theft. When we drove away in the van, the man was still standing there, gun in the air, a Bernie Goetz scarecrow come to life.

4. Discipline Workers Who Masturbate in Front of Supervisors

When teenagers hang out with other teenagers, sex is a popular topic. Add music to the mix, and things can get steamy. On days when a radio was available, my older charges would demonstrate a dance called "the dog," the kind of performance art intercourse that could make a girl throw down her rake and stare. I mention this to show that neither I nor my fellow supervisors discouraged things sexual—not that anyone ever listened to us—but in retrospect maybe we at least should have tried.

One day when we were working at a forested park along Lake Erie, a boy who especially liked to leer and speechify about his sexual prowess called me over. When I arrived, he began to rub his crotch. As I stammered some well-considered rebuke like, "What the fuck are you doing?" he unzipped his pants and continued his self-massage, only now with a better grip. "You're not going to get away with this," I threatened as I marched away.

Alas, he did get away with it. When I told the park boss, he just shrugged. These kids needed the jobs and the money, so he didn't want to fire, or even suspend, any of them. Besides, I suspect my boss would have felt a tad hypocritical disciplining the boy for sexual misconduct. On many days, one or another of the girls was allowed to stay at park headquarters with him, and rumor had it they were bedding down in his well-appointed office. Other times, the driver or an adult CETA worker would disappear into the van with a girl. The younger workers would point furiously to the van, "Look, look, it's rocking." As for the masturbator, he talked trash to me all summer, but at least never offered a repeat performance. From then on, however, I more or less gave up trying to make the kids work. If I couldn't get the tiniest amount of reinforcement from the higher-ups, why put myself out? The kids liked the laissez-faire approach better, anyway; by the end of the summer, they had even dropped the "Brubaker." "Hey, lady," they'd call out when they wanted my attention.

My story is, of course, only one woman's experience, and, while worse tales of corruption and unproductivity contributed to CETA's downfall, some studies of the program show that its lousy reputation isn't deserved. Brookings Institution researchers report that CETA workers often performed admirably, doing jobs state and local governments otherwise couldn't afford: litter clean-up, for one. And I suppose that, despite ourselves, my crew and I did manage to beautify a few parks.

Even if CETA were an unmitigated disaster, that wouldn't mean jobs programs should be scrapped. On the contrary, a jobs program may be the most politically palatable way to extend a safety net for the poor and is probably an important part of welfare reform. It's just that if the government opts for a work program, it must ensure that it is competently managed—something utterly lacking in my CETA experience. This means, in

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the first place, that legislators must articulate what they want the program to accomplish.

So far, it seems that the House Republicans expect a public jobs program to carry a much heavier burden than Democrats do. Clinton's welfare reform plan provides minimum-wage jobs to anyone who after two years of welfare cannot, despite a good faith effort, find work. It first targets welfare recipients for training and education; then, for those who still need job help, it creates a small, manageable jobs program—394,000 work slots by 2000. The work program is a last resort.

The Republican jobs program not only is four times larger than Clinton's but also has a different purpose. Under the Personal Responsibility Act of the Contract with America, welfare recipients must accept public jobs while on the dole as a way to "work off" their government checks. When their welfare allotment runs out, they're out of a job, even if they can't find anything else. This approach either leaves the poor with no help whatsoever or seems to require an additional jobs program to prepare people to compete in the private sector afterward—an extremely difficult and expensive task. The Republican proposal doesn't expand job training and education for welfare recipients at all (in fact, because of its financing provisions, it would almost certainly reduce such efforts). Thus, the work program alone carries the burden of equipping mothers for success in the regular economy—and, if CETA is any indication, that's not likely to happen. While a well-run jobs program should play a role in welfare reform, it can't transform millions of unemployed women into skilled worker bees ready to swarm the private marketplace.

LAURIE ABRAHAM is the author of *Mama Might Be Better Off Dead: The Failure of Health Care in Urban America* (University of Chicago Press).

The creepy unanimity of Gingrich's henchmen.

THE G-MEN

By Weston Kosova

Representative Bill Paxon is hovering on the edge of his seat. His hands are carving circles in the air. His feet are shuffling channels in the carpet. His grin is huge, his eyes are wide. He is talking about Newt Gingrich.

"You know, there's a lot of folks out there who think of Newt as austere and hard-headed," Paxon says. "But it's not true! Certainly not personally. He's a great listener. He really knows how to listen. And you pick up the phone, and you tell him your ideas, and nine out of ten times you walk away from that—no, wait. I take that back. Ninety-*nine* percent of the time you walk away satisfied that he's been listening to you, that he's heard you, that he understands what you're trying to say."

In the past few months, Paxon has had a lot to say to Gingrich. The chairman of the National Republican Congressional Committee (NRCC), he is one of a small coterie that spends hours each week hashing out strategy with the new speaker. In the past, the most a junior member such as Paxon could hope for was a humble spot as a regional whip. Gingrich changed that. In addition to veterans such as Robert Walker, Majority Leader Richard Armey and Whip Tom DeLay, Gingrich also anointed three younger, less experienced but slavishly loyal underlings: John Boehner (that's BAY-ner) who has taken over for Armey as chairman of the Republican Conference, was a member of the Ohio House just five years ago; Christopher Cox of California, who heads the Republican Policy Committee, worked in the White House Counsel's office under Ronald Reagan; Paxon is a former New York state legislator. "It stands the seniority system on its head," Paxon explains excitedly. "Seniority isn't important. Activism and participation are the keystones for advancement."

And obedience. It has often been remarked that last November Americans voted against Bill Clinton, against his policies, against his character, against his style. But looking at the authoritarian discipline of Gingrich's emerging leadership in Congress is enough to make one yearn for the indecision and chaos of the White House. Forget Clinton's spokes of a wheel. Gingrich is running the House with a hierarchy of yes-men. Critical to this structure are his three junior lieutenants, Boehner, Cox and Paxon, plucked out of obscurity and forever indebted to Gingrich. Together, they form his honor guard.

As a group, they're perfectly matched. All three are in their 40s. All are Roman Catholics representing overwhelmingly white, middle- to upper-middle-class districts. (Eighty-four percent of Cox's constituents and 96 percent of Boehner's and Paxon's are white.) Hawks all, none served in Vietnam, although none dodged

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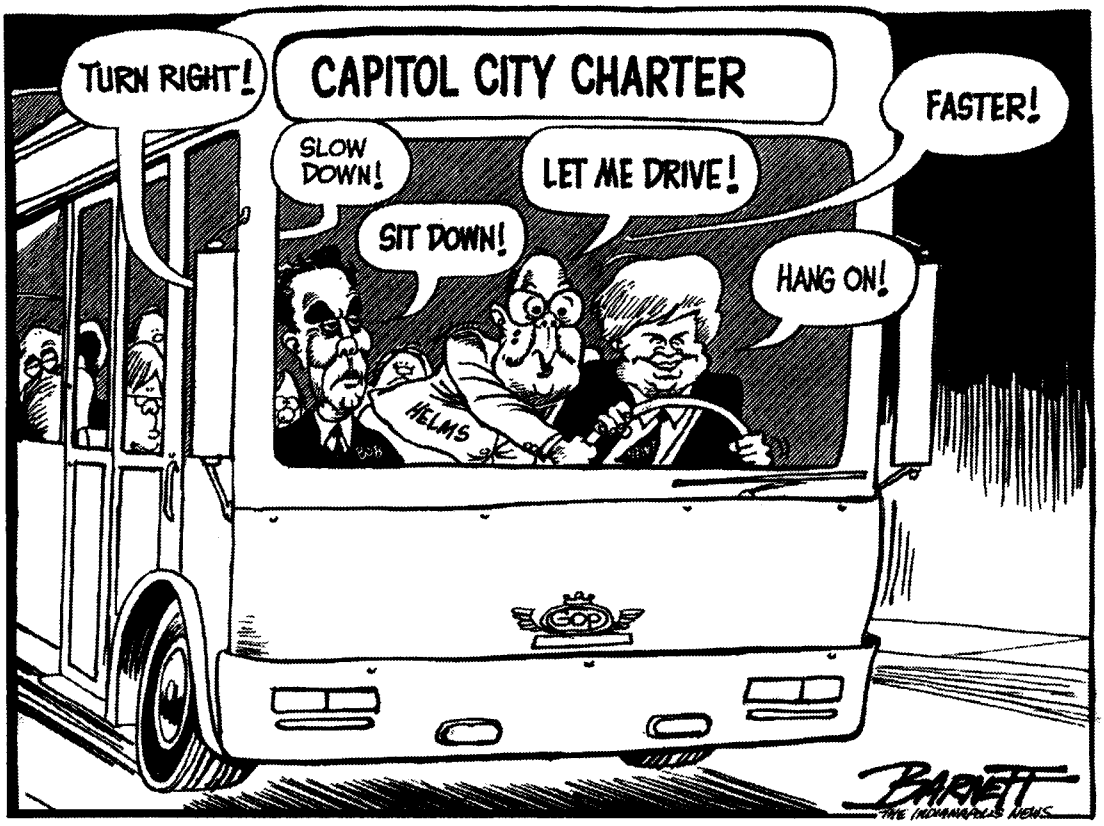

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the draft. Unlike the more seasoned Armey and DeLay, who have cultivated reputations as cagey and capricious pols (and who have at times strayed from Newt's gospel), the young charges never fail Gingrich. The speaker knows he can depend on them to carry out his orders without a peep of public dissent. They even mimic Gingrich's speech patterns, adopting his favorite words ("structure," "paradigmatic," "pro-active") and salting their anecdotes with his pet phrases ("truly transformative," "truly overwhelming," "truly, truly amazing").

Paxon is perhaps the most thoroughly Newtered. During the congressional campaign, it was his job as NRCC chief to fulfill Gingrich's promise of a Republican majority. Gingrich rewarded his efforts with an invitation to sit in on the weekly meetings of his informal advisory group. But try to hand Paxon even the slightest credit and he becomes flustered. When others praise his contribution to the November victory, he throws himself into convulsions of self-deprecation, deflecting all credit to Newt. "Oh yeah! Yeah right! Haaaaa!" he says, doubling over and smashing his palms to his face. "It's time for you to find some new sources! That's hysterical! That's just ludicrous! I did very little."

Paxon's Gingrich worship is, frankly, exhausting. But it's understandable. Paxon and his brethren owe a great deal to their patron. Gingrich was their means of ascent. When they first arrived in the Capitol, Paxon, Boehner and Cox were demoralized by what they found waiting for them. At the time, Robert Michel of Illinois was the longstanding House minority leader. With his insistence on decorum and ceremony, Michel seemed a politician of another era, politely doffing his hat to Democrats in the corridors. In 1988, the year Paxon was elected, Michel gave a weary exhortation to House Republicans in which he urged them to keep their heads down. "You know, every day I wake up and look in the mirror and say to myself, 'Today you're going to be a loser,' " Michel told the crowd, according to a participant. "And after you're here a while you'll start to feel the same way, too. But don't let it bother you. You'll get used to it."

At the same time Michel was succumbing, however, Newt Gingrich and his henchmen were plotting their rise. In 1983 Gingrich had formed the Conservative Opportunity Society (COS), a group of restless right-wingers bent on winning back the House. Gingrich, Walker, Vin Weber, Jack Kemp, Connie Mack and about a dozen other members began meeting regularly Wednesday mornings at 8:00 in Room 121 in the Cannon Building. The group had just one rule: a member couldn't send staff to attend unless he came himself. "What we wanted was a shared experience of members, not a shared experience of staff," says Walker. (Gingrich has now applied the same condition to all leadership meetings.)

Gingrich's rebels stormed the empty House chamber, delivering tirades for the benefit of C-SPAN insomniacs. "It was almost like group therapy," Paxon remembers. "You do matter. You are important. We can change this system." Paxon, Boehner and Cox became fervent COS acolytes, regulars at the Wednesday morning sessions. "When Newt and the others would talk about what was possible, it was like a dog whistle," says Cox. "Some people heard it and some people didn't. If you were tuned into that frequency it made a lot of sense." Paxon and the rest of the litter came panting after the sound.

But the aspiring Newtoids were hardly tribunes of populism. "The quintessential political junkie," says Republican Representative David Dreier about Paxon. "He thrives on campaigns, on races." Paxon thrills to the description. "Definitely," he says. Paxon is as pleasant and affable a man as you'll ever see. At 40, he looks ten years younger. Tall and thin, at times he doesn't seem in full possession of his lanky limbs, which tend to wave about as he talks. He makes earnest eye contact and calls you by your first name often. Late to an interview, he is overwhelmingly, and genuinely, apologetic. "I'm so sorry. No, really. Please forgive me. Really. I am so sorry. Can I get you a Coke or something?"

Paxon has learned well the benefits of showing kindness to strangers. From the time he was a kid in rural New York, the man who would stage-manage the Republican comeback was corn-fed on GOP politics. His father was a family court judge, an elected position. His mother was a local committee member. Paxon says his earliest memories are of attending political rallies for local candidates and plastering his neighborhood with leaflets of his parents' favorite Republicans. By the time he reached high school, he was fully imbued with the glory of the GOP. "I was in the Teenage Republicans, the Young Republicans, the College Republicans." In 1968, as a student at the local Catholic boys' school, he proudly displayed a poster of Richard Nixon in his locker. In his senior year the voting age was lowered from 21 to 18. In a class of 130, Paxon was one of two students who registered as Republicans.

In 1972 Paxon left the countryside for the big city, enrolling at Fordham University. But he soon returned. "I couldn't stand being away from Buffalo during a presidential campaign," he says. So he transferred to

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nearby Canisius College. In his free time, Paxon signed up with candidates he knew would lose. "For example," Paxon says, "Buffalo is 99 percent a very, very ethnic city, so what do I do in 1973? I go work for a guy, Stuart Levy, a Jewish guy who was running for Buffalo.... There was no way that Stuart Levy was going to beat Stanley Makowski for mayor of Buffalo. But I worked for Stuart Levy because it was a challenge. You could learn more. And I did."

After college Paxon managed his father's 1975 race for re-election. It would be dad's last turn. The post-Watergate backlash was wiping out Republicans across the country. Two years later Paxon decided to plaster his own face around town. At age 24, he won an open seat in the Erie County legislature. Paxon modeled himself after his boyhood political hero: Jack Kemp. He had worked on Kemp's successful House campaign in 1970 and still idolized the congressman. "I and a group of others kind of modeled our activities on what COS was doing here in Washington. Gingrich, Weber, Walker, Kemp were kind of the lodestar for many of us there in Buffalo, and across the country. And we put together an informal little group of county legislators that kind of styled us on the COS model."

No matter how popular it may have been among Republicans in Washington, the "COS model" didn't go over very well in Buffalo. "I'll never forget this one time when the county executive introduced the budget and a group of other conservatives and I went after it and tried to cut the budget and lower taxes," Paxon says, smile widening. "The county chairman called me into his office and he said, 'What are you *doing*?' And I said, 'Well, we're doing the same thing that Jack Kemp is doing in Washington!' I remember he broke the glass top on his table!" Paxon moved up to the New York Assembly in 1982, where he added Gingrich to his pantheon. "I was always watching what Newt and the COS were trying to do," Paxon says. When Kemp retired from Congress in 1988 to run for president, Paxon ran for the empty seat and won. He joined COS his first week.

In his second term, Paxon was elected head of the NRCC. It was a job nobody wanted. Paxon's predecessor, Guy Vander Jagt, had run the operation into the ground while piling up a $5 million debt. Members refused to contribute, complaining that it was a sinkhole. "After eighteen years, Guy pretty much had made it his own operation," Paxon says gingerly. Paxon cut the committee's ninety-person staff in half and began twisting arms. He got Boehner to sign on as finance chair and convinced Representative Jim Nussle to serve as chief recruiter. Representative Nancy Johnson was charged with divvying up money to incumbents. "All told, we had forty, fifty members heavily involved," Paxon says.

During the elections, Paxon was constantly at Gingrich's side. He dutifully pored over the poll numbers, systematically targeting vulnerable Democrats for annihilation. He lined up Republican challengers in districts where Democrats traditionally ran unopposed and muscled colleagues to lavish dollars on wobbly GOP incumbents. Gingrich relied on him for daily, sometimes hourly, updates on tight races. If Paxon identified a Republican challenger in distress, he'd tell Gingrich, who'd hop on a plane to the candidate's hometown.

The work, obviously, paid off. In the process, Gingrich came to trust Paxon's advice. Now he's counting on him to shore up the Republican majority in '96. These days, Paxon spends his time gearing up for the next election cycle, and sitting in on the endless leadership meetings that take up as much as four or five hours a day. Trying to identify with any specificity Paxon's—or Boehner's or Cox's—contributions to those meetings is nearly impossible. Call the White House on any given day, and you can find fifteen spurned Clintonites dying to give their versions of what *really* went on behind closed doors. But, in Gingrich's gang of six, there are no leaks. Each of the participants knows it's too easy to figure out who said what about whom. The speaker has created a closed universe. There is no speculation emanating from the ranks of the leadership. No dissent. No conflicting accounts. There are only Official Truths.

And Paxon, for one, can't think of another place he'd rather be than at Gingrich's side. Last fall, he married New York Representative Susan Molinari, another Newtoid who's now the vice chair of the Republican conference. Instead of doting on his bride, he worked nights at the Capitol with Newt. "Over the last two years I've probably seen more of him than I've seen of my wife," Paxon says. "She said that was probably true. He is just an amazing man to watch." Thinking back on his career, he suddenly turns reflective. "You know, I never really thought of it, but in some ways I'm like Newt. He kind of dedicated his life to becoming a member of Congress. And I did, too."

"I think it's fairly unprecedented," John Boehner says plainly of his rapid ascendance. "It's been a hundred years since a member after two terms was elected to this level of the leadership." Snatching a green Bic lighter off his desk, he fires up a Barclay King and inhales slowly, deeply. With decidedly un-Paxonesque brashness, he adds that he made it on his own. "Newt was not involved in my race." He punctuates the remark with a thick, loose cough.

Like Paxon and Cox, Boehner was elected by his colleagues to his perch as chairman of the Republican Conference. It's a tricky job. The conference chairman's duties aren't as sharply defined as, say, those of a whip. Essentially, he's the manager of the leadership, settling disputes between members, shuttling their ideas to the speaker and working the floor to gauge the general mood of the members. "I think what I represent are well more than half of the Republicans who have been here less than four years," he says. "And part of my race was it's time for a new generation of Republican leaders to step forward."

But Boehner's bootstrap version of his rise to power

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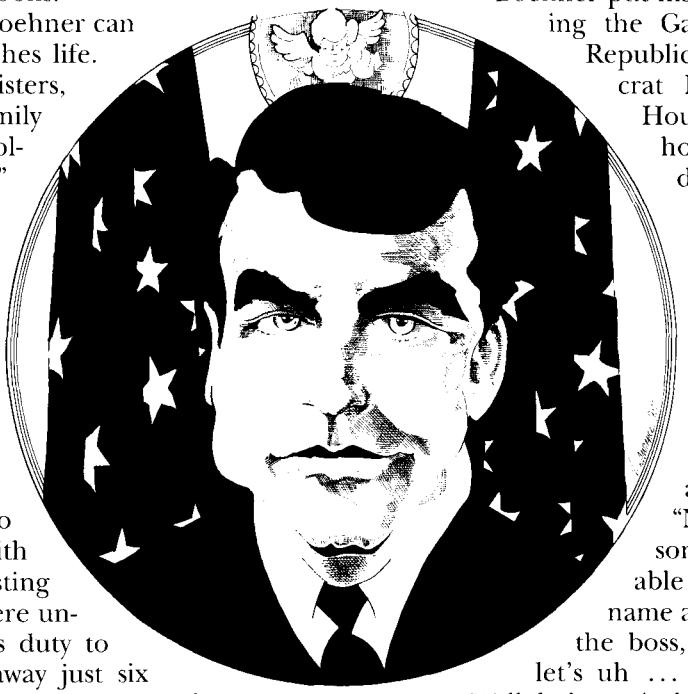
suffers from the same problem as all tales of the self-made man: he's left a few things out. Gingrich didn't exactly watch Boehner's race for conference chairman from the sidelines. Robert Livingston of Louisiana, better-known and far more senior than Boehner, was also eyeing the job. But Gingrich smoothly took him out of contention by asking Livingston to chair the Appropriations Committee—a plum assignment. In squeezing Livingston out, Gingrich was repaying a debt. In the fall of 1993, when Bob Michel announced his retirement, it was Boehner who coordinated Gingrich's quiet maneuvers to slip into Michel's post unchallenged. Boehner's ties to his fellow junior Republicans helped him deliver dozens of votes to the aspiring speaker. "John has the ability to seed revolutions," says Walker. "Definitely future speaker material," Paxon swoons.



Alone among his peers, Boehner can make claims to a rags-to-riches life. Of eleven brothers and sisters, "I'm the only one in my family ever to attempt to go to college, let alone graduate," Boehner says. He attended classes at Xavier University at night, while working a series of daytime jobs. In 1969 he took a hiatus from college and enlisted in the Navy. "I didn't know enough about the intricacies of why we were there, but the fact is we were in Vietnam, and I wanted us to win," he says. "The people with long hair who were protesting against the war I thought were un-American at the time." His duty to country would keep him away just six weeks. While driving a heavy equipment truck, Boehner aggravated a high school sports injury. "I was [in Mississippi] four days, five days, cleaning up the mess from hurricane Camille when my back went out. A disk. They did all these examinations and said, 'You're outta here.' " He returned to work and school. By the time he graduated in 1977, he was part owner of a plastics and packaging business.

Until then, Boehner says, he never gave politics a thought. "I come here as a product of free enterprise. I grew up in a Democratic household." But then came that moment in every nascent Republican's emergence when he realized the Democrats had done him wrong. For Boehner, the year was 1978, "when I paid more in taxes than I had earned gross in 1976." He became a Reagan supporter. At the same time, Boehner's own political ambitions sparked to life. "I was president of our homeowners' association. After going to a few school board meetings and township trustee meetings, I decided to run for township trustee."

Smitten with his new calling, he went on to win a seat in the Ohio House of Representatives in 1984. Five years later, Donald E. "Buz" Lukens, the congressman from his district, was convicted on a misdemeanor count after a sexual encounter with a 16-year-old girl. When Lukens refused to step down, Boehner jumped in the race. But so did six other candidates, including Thomas Kindness, a former six-term representative looking to make a comeback. Entering the race, Boehner was nearly sixty points behind the front-runner. "I didn't have a chance," he says. "I was in seventh. I mean, when your name is Beener? Bonner? Boner? And your opponent is *Kindness*?" Still, Boehner won by assaulting Kindness instead of Lukens, smearing him as an insider lobbyist.

Boehner caught Gingrich's attention immediately. When the House post office and bank scandals broke, Boehner put his COS training to work forming the Gang of Seven, a group of Republican freshmen out for Democrat heads. They stormed the House floor; held the talk shows hostage; shut the House bank down. Emboldened, Boehner successfully lobbied to kill congressional pay raises. Gingrich liked Boehner's brashness, and asked him to take over the COS at the start of the 1992 session. "I'm one of the few people who's willing to give Newt honest advice," Boehner swaggers. "Newt is not the kind of person most people feel comfortable disagreeing with." Asked to name a time he has had to upbraid the boss, Boehner falls silent. "Oh, let's uh ... I'm trying to find one.... Well, let's put it this way...."

At least one of Boehner's colleagues finds the bravado amusing, if not convincing. "He likes to think of himself as a kind of maverick," says one House Republican of Boehner. "And he is, in his own crowd. But, when it comes down to the wire, he's as loyal and deferential as he needs to be."

Boehner is still thinking. "Okay, I've got one. Some of us were talking to Newt two years ago about what it would take to become the next Republican leader. This was in anticipation of Bob Michel retiring. So I said, 'Newt, you have to *smile* once in a while at some of these members. These people can either vote for you or they can vote against you.' " That was just the beginning of his advice. " 'And beyond smiling, how about just talking to 'em?' Newt's mind is going a million miles an hour and he'd walk right by them. These are the kind of personal things that nobody wants to give him the truth about." How did Newt respond? "He took it real well. He said, 'Yeah, yeah, yeah, O.K., I'll do it. I'll do it.' " Boehner reaches for a light. "But you'll

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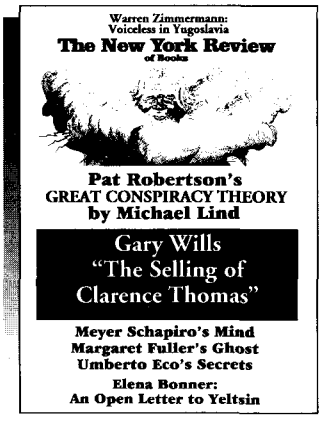

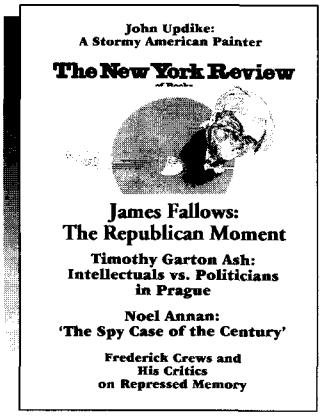

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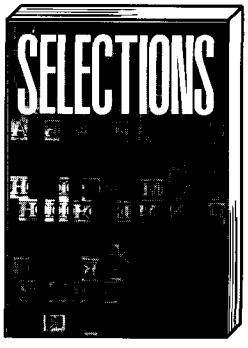

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find that's the kind of person I am," he exhales. "I just lay it all out on the table."

A few times a week, whenever Gingrich feels the need, he convenes the members of his informal advisory group. It's a less rigid and ceremonial affair than the weekly meeting of the full leadership. You raise your hand to talk instead of putting your name on a list. As he's done for years, Gingrich has Walker lead the meeting. "He doesn't like the business of chairing meetings," Walker says. "He thinks that takes him out of the flow of conversation. He gets a chance to be part of the discussion." The group usually consists of six people: Gingrich, Armey, Walker, DeLay, Paxon and Boehner. "I would say our leadership team has a think-tank approach," Armey says. "This is one thing Newt does extraordinarily well. We all have our say, then we do our distilling and synthesis process. There's this incredibly congenial meshing of the minds."

But among the meshing minds one cerebral cortex is notably absent: Christopher Cox's. Although he attends the meetings of the full leadership, Cox isn't invited to the smaller klatches. Armey insists that it's "just a matter of having to make a decision about group size." Perhaps, but there's another reason. Cox is the triumvirate's odd man out. "They think he's weird," explains a House aide. You can hear it in the way his colleagues damn him with faint praise. "Chris is a *very bright* member," Boehner says. "He has a ... different perspective on many issues. It's not that we disagree, but, well, he always tends to have the, the *California* perspective, let's call it."

In Gingrich's pasty-faced circle, Cox is something of an oddity. He's tan. He's got great teeth. He water-skis. Democrats like him. Barney Frank, the most hated man in Gingrichdom, is a fan. "I think Chris is one of the smartest men in Congress. He doesn't demagogue the issues like some of the others." But there's another difference. Ask him a question, and he takes a minute to think of an answer. When he doesn't know, he says so. "Some find Cox's thoughtfulness off-putting," says an aide to a House Democrat. "He's a look before you leap kind of guy, and they're more like leap first, look later—if you absolutely have to." Boehner settles on this explanation. "He gets into a lot of detail. An awful lot of detail, which is a little different than some of us who don't personally get into that level of detail."

Unfortunately for Cox, he doesn't have much choice. He has to sweat the details. That's what the policy chairman does. "It's pure legislative R&D," he says. "I'm a traffic cop at a very busy intersection." After a bill squirms its way through the committee, Cox totes it around to the rest of the House Republicans, giving them a chance to ask questions and scribble in changes. The idea is to prevent members from having to vote on a bill they've never seen, let alone had a chance to think about. As a result, Cox is the one man in the triumvirate who has to be more than an obliging booster for the Contract with America: he has to know what's in it.

He's well suited to the task. Of the three, Christopher Cox, Harvard J.D., MBA, is the only one who could be mistaken for an egghead. But he's far from the woolly-minded nonconformist his colleagues may suspect him to be. A Minnesota native (he moved to California to attend USC), Cox was raised on hearty Midwestern conservatism.

As an undergrad, Cox looked like any self-respecting hippie. "I had long hair," he admits. But that's about as radical as he got. Like the close-cropped Boehner, he disliked war protesters. "I think I was opposed to a lot of forms of disagreement against the war that I saw at the time. One of the reasons he chose to go to USC—apart from the fact that "it was where my grandmother had season tickets forever and it was where my father went"—was that Stanford, his first choice, was awash in protest. "When I went to visit Stanford, it was in the middle of a moratorium and all of those beautiful buildings were spray-painted with slogans. And it seemed inconsistent with getting an education in any subject." But Cox's disdain for the flower power movement wasn't enough to make him drop his books and grab a rifle. He held fast to his student deferment until 1971, when he took his chances and dropped it. He drew a high number. At Harvard he remained studious, joining the law review. He also joined "Republicans for Reagan."

Cox took a leave from his Newport Beach law firm in 1986 and went to work for the Gipper in the White House Counsel's office. He was in awe. "It was a wonderful place to work," Cox beams. "As the ultimate boss, President Reagan was an outstanding person for whom to work. Among other things, there was never a story of Ronald Reagan picking up a book and throwing it across the room or anything like that."

Before long, Cox was moonlighting as a speechwriter. He penned Reagan's nomination scripts for Robert Bork, Douglas Ginsburg and Anthony Kennedy. Cox was one of the leading crusaders in the White House on behalf of Bork. Scouring the law schools for supporters, he assembled the vast list of witnesses who testified on Bork's behalf. While the other lawyers in the Counsel's office were losing clumps of hair over the Iran-contra debacle, Cox put his efforts into the more tedious, less hazardous problem of reforming the legal maze of federal budget regulations. Reagan was pushing a balanced budget amendment, and at the time it looked like it had a chance.

But Cox wouldn't have the chance to see it through, at least not that time around. In 1988 a congressional seat came open in Orange County when Robert Badham called it quits. Cox got into the race late. By the time he announced his candidacy, the donor rolls were dry. All of the GOP money had been divvied up among the other candidates. He had found his campaign theme: "I ended up running against the Republican establishment. Not by choice, but simply because they were gone." Cox was not welcomed by the party. The other candidates piled on, attempting to

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paint the Reagan barnstormer as a sissy liberal. One campaign attack featured two huge arrows ominously stretching across the country into California: one from Massachusetts that bastion of Harvardites, the other from Minnesota, the hotbed of '60s radicalism. Cox countered with ads of his and Ronald Reagan's yucking it up in the Oval Office. He swept the primary and won with 67 percent of the vote.

Just before the election, Cox was paid a visit by another rising politician: Gingrich. Newt was passing through LAX and made a point of contacting Cox, whom he saw as a potential supporter. Gingrich put the schmooze on him, asking him to look him up when he arrived in the Capitol. It worked. Like his fellow G-men, Cox soon cottoned to the COS and to Gingrich. As a legislator, Cox attempted something that Boehner and Paxon largely shrugged off: legislation. He won a seat on the Budget Committee and continued his crusade to cut spending. But even there his efforts were largely partisan. He was especially fierce in battling to gut the General Accounting Office. He and Barney Frank have sponsored a bill to kill the $700 million Strategic Helium Reserve, a World War I relic. Since November, though, Cox hasn't had much time for anything but his duties to Newt. His days are filled with the frantic effort to pass the contract before the first 100 days are up. "Leadership meetings. Policy meetings. I came back here the day after the election and I've been in California only a few weekends since then," he says. "I haven't had time to devote to my district."

Or, for that matter, to his own ideas. Gingrich has constructed his administration to put a premium on loyalty. Paxon, for one, learned early on the dangers of crossing the leader. In November the man whose job it was to keep tally of the congressional races told reporters that the Republicans would likely pick up just twenty-two seats in the House. Gingrich was furious. "I thought you were with me on this," he scolded, according to *Roll Call*'s Timothy J. Burger. Paxon was reduced to claiming he'd been misquoted. And Cox, clearly the brightest of the three, has learned the perils of appearing too conflicted, too nuanced, too smart. His title keeps him in the big rooms, but his murkiness keeps him out of the smaller ones.

Lest they risk out-pacing the speaker, Boehner, Cox and Paxon hold fast to the blandest banalities when asked about issues on the Republican agenda. Listen to John Boehner on the flat tax: "I think it's a good idea. I think the American people want a change toward a simpler tax structure, and I think we will be able to give it to them." Or Bill Paxon on the Contract with America: "The Republicans are determined to move forward on our agenda of a balanced budget, line-item veto, term limits, issues that the American people want done. And we're hoping the president says, 'If you send them to me, we'll sign them into law.' " Platitudes like these may not be any duller than the pieties other politicians spew forth, but they're pretty disappointing coming from men who are supposed to be fomenting a revolution. These are not the sentiments of revolutionaries; they are the blandishments of functionaries.

But then, Gingrich, who talks incessantly about the importance of ideas, has not surrounded himself with men of ideas. The members of the G-Team are workers, not thinkers. To them, strategy is philosophy. Which is precisely how Gingrich likes it. Though he expounds upon the significance of the leader-team, spins theories of the decentralization of power, he surrounds himself with men he knows will not question him. Though they must wear their loyalty on their sleeves, however, the G-Men must be careful at the same time not to expose themselves as mere toadies. It is a difficult line to walk: they must be useful toadies. For, all around them, younger, faster, smarter colleagues are vying for Newt's attention, aching to win his confidence and with it a seat at his arm. These days, the Wednesday morning gatherings of the COS are packed with them. "Sometimes when I get to the meeting I can't even find a seat," says Walker. "When there's a room in town that has produced nearly every leader in the Congress, you're naturally going to want to find that room and be in it."

The speaker is a finicky character, and Boehner, Cox and Paxon know that at any time he is liable to pluck fresher, more eager faces from this crowd and install them at their places at the table. One morning they may find themselves on the outs at roundtables they were never asked to attend, shut out of strategy sessions that never made it to their schedulers' ears—made old by Gingrich's worship of the new. When Paxon boasts of Newt that "anyone can be a member of the inner circle," there is an edge in his voice.

The access Cox, Boehner and Paxon have to Gingrich makes them the envy of their colleagues. But that access comes with a price. There may be no sound more pleasing to them than the voice of a worshipful young freshman pleading, "Can you please pass this idea on to Newt?" But there is no sound more threatening, either. •

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BOOKS & The Arts

Stanley Kauffmann on Films

Scenes of the Crimes

For centuries bookshelves have groaned with folio volumes of scene design, art that was made for the theater. Fairly soon in our century, design for film began to be appreciated. It still is, but not enough. The best film designers deserve scrutiny and comment equivalent to what is given the theater. How about an international folio volume of film design every ten years or so?

Certainly I can't maintain that film has as yet produced design at the level of the theater masters of the past—Appia, Craig, Bakst, Jones, Svoboda among them—but certainly, too, fine work in film is often inadequately acknowledged. And let's emphasize that, just as in the theater, design often can be of higher quality than the piece for which it is done.

A few weeks ago, reviewing *Disclosure*, I began with Neil Spisak's main setting, an office building. That fascinating structure was by far the most topical element in a film that strove for cutting-edge topicality. Now there's **Bad Company** (Touchstone). Andrew McAlpine's designs throughout are in themselves dramatic (though I did wonder at the leading man's luxe apartment, given the salary that we know he gets); but again it's the chief setting, a company's headquarters, that sets the mood of the story, wherever it wanders. That setting freezes us in awe, and insidiously supports the plot even when it gets a bit flaky.

This company is a high-tech, high-powered secret organization, specializing in industrial espionage, blackmail and, if needed, more. Everything is quiet, scary, rich. McAlpine has given the boss an office that looks like the inside of an oversize bunker—high ceilings, walls of large rough concrete slabs, furniture that seems small and grudging. The effect is especially ruthless since we know that the boss could have had all the voluptuousness in the world and chose this austerity. (Coincidence: like *Disclosure*, *Bad Company* is set in Seattle, though it was actually shot in Vancouver.)

The boss is played by Frank Langella who is smoothly competent, but he doesn't have the tacit diabolism that, say, Robert Duvall might have brought to the part. His chief associate is Ellen Barkin. Like Demi Moore of *Disclosure*, Barkin is making a mainstay of sex and sexiness; unlike Moore, Barkin has some acting ability. The leading man is Laurence Fishburne, ominously granitic as an operative discharged by the CIA and hired by this private company for what he learned in his previous job.

The plot is sufficiently plotty. Only two points need to be made about it. The author, Ross Thomas, has apparently read Le Carré. (I can't specify more without tipping too much.) And, as in *Pulp Fiction*, to name only one recent example, the characters' inner landscape is flatly amoral.

About the casting, a racial point. In past films, when a black man got involved with a white woman, the screenplay usually heaved and fretted about who was coming to dinner. This screenplay doesn't even mention that Fishburne is black, as is his sidekick (who is also gay). I'd bet that it was only after the screenplay was finished and production began that the filmmakers decided to cast Fishburne and Michael Beach in those two parts and to ignore their race in the dialogue. It's almost completely ignored even when those two men are by themselves, and it's certainly ignored when Fishburne and Barkin are having their hot and heavy sex, which both of them know is only a matter of the moment.

Carter Burwell's score does almost as much for the film as McAlpine's designs, helping to keep the story moderately credible even when it tries us. Damian Harris, who directed, keeps us very close to his people much of the time. The action moves so fast so near to us that we feel we have to keep our elbows tucked in.

Marc Rocco, who directed **Murder in the First** (Warner Bros.), also keeps his camera close, but for different reasons. Most of this film is set in Alcatraz or in prison cells elsewhere, and Rocco wants simultaneously to "iconize" the grimness and to press us into it. His best help comes in this case not from his designer, though Kirk M. Petrucelli's work is good, but from his cinematographer. Rocco calls on Fred Murphy to transmute shots of a naked prisoner in solitary confinement into a series of pictures, almost posters, that underscore inhumanity precisely by being good pictures. The civilized world looks aesthetically at its underside. Murphy, who did *The Dead* and *Enemies, A Love Story*, suggests a secret halation, not a glow around the edges but a kind of contained radiation.

FILMS WORTH SEEING

The Madness of King George. *Nigel Hawthorne is virtuosic as the mad/sane king, in Alan Bennett's brightly written screenplay (from his theater work), swirlingly directed by Nicholas Hytner. (Reviewed 1/30/95)* **Strawberry and Chocolate.** *A gay young man and a straight young man become argumentative, appreciative friends in Castro's Havana. Thoughtful, subtle, courageous. (2/6/95)* **Tsahal.** *From Claude Lanzmann, who made* Shoah. *A five-hour documentary about the Israeli Defense Forces and the Israelis' relation to them. Could have been condensed, but much of it is pungent, wry, moving. (2/13/95)* **Vanya on 42nd Street.** *A gem. A "run-through" rehearsal of "Uncle Vanya" in an abandoned Times Square theater. Parnassian acting and directing. (11/7/94)*—**SK**

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The screenplay by Dan Gordon is, as is often the case these days, based on fact. Henri Young was an Alcatraz inmate late in the 1930s who was imprisoned for a very petty crime. He and other inmates tried to escape. Some were killed. Young was caught, and the warden put him in solitary. The maximum solitary imprisonment was supposed to be nineteen days; Young was kept there three years, with thirty minutes each year for exercise. When at last he was returned to his former cell, he killed the prisoner who had snitched to the warden about the escape plans.

The center of the film is the murder trial. The public defender tries to prove that Alcatraz, the institution and the administration, made Young a murderer. The trial, in San Francisco, gets national play as a battle for prison reform. This last element is what justifies the making of this picture. Alcatraz itself is now only a tourist spot, but the subject of prison reform persists.

As the public defender, who is surprisingly agile in court considering that this is his first case, Christian Slater does as well as any young actor could who is devoid of striking endowments. Gary Oldman, the English actor who is adept at accents and who lately soldiered through the role of Beethoven in *Immortal Beloved*, here takes on another tough job as the sadistic warden. The difficulty here is not in making a composer's genius believable but in making a cliché interesting. Oldman almost succeeds.

Young is played by Kevin Bacon. The man is beaten, starved, tortured, all of which is welcome to an actor. Much to Bacon's credit, he goes for the man, not the acting bonanza. It's a struggle for Bacon—and I'm not doubting the facts of the matter—because the part is so clearly designed to knock us out; but Bacon is honest, in touch with Young's sources or lack of them.

Slater's female law colleague is a run-of-the-mill young woman, presented adequately by Embeth Davidtz. It comes as something of a shock to remember that, in *Schindler's List*, Davidtz was agonizingly superb as the Polish Jew whom the Nazi commander took into his home as a maid. In her bland role here, I suppose Davidtz shows some range; still I hope that more demanding roles lie ahead for this exceptional talent.

Rocco has evidently been of real help to his actors, especially Slater and Bacon, but his own work sometimes verges on the lush. His camera moves more than it needs to and strains for odd angles. A sequence set on the Fourth of July makes sure we see lots of fireworks; a sequence in Chinatown begins—pointlessly—with close-ups of slippered Chinese feet. Obviously Rocco was looking for relief from the predominant prison and courtroom interiors, but his anxiety obtrudes a bit. If he can get the restraint for himself that he's achieved with some of his actors, he may develop what many American directors do not have—style. •

Isaiah Berlin and the fate of humanism.

The Philosopher of Sympathy

By Avishai Margalit

People who talk with Isaiah Berlin are often struck by a feeling of regret that he does not write his autobiography. Many have annoyed him with their excited pleas that he should devote himself to this task. The demand is understandable. After all, Berlin was at several "observation posts" from which he could follow closely the unfolding of some of the central events in this century.

Avishai Margalit is a professor of philosophy at the Hebrew University. His book *The Decent Society* will be published by Harvard University Press.

In 1915, when Berlin was 6, his family moved from Riga and eventually ended up in Petrograd. From a window above a Petrograd shop in Wassily Ostrov, the child Shaya, as he was affectionately called by his parents (it is a diminutive of the original Hebrew for "Isaiah"), watched the Russian Revolution. In 1920, when he was almost 11, the family emigrated to England. They landed in March, the young Isaiah wearing a coat with a fur collar and knowing very little English. In July of that same year, he won the Surbiton's Arundel House School's first prize for an English essay.

Later Berlin was posted at still another central event of the century. At the

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British Embassy in Washington, the young don from Oxford served as a first secretary during World War II, in order to report to the British government on American public opinion during the war. The folklore about Berlin in Washington is vast, and it includes the true story of Churchill being impressed by the reports from Washington and asking to meet "this man Berlin," shortly after which the British prime minister found himself entertaining Irving Berlin. The mix-up between Isaiah and Irving was not new. Already in 1932, when Berlin was elected first Jewish Fellow of All Souls College in Oxford, there was much excitement in the Jewish community in England, and the Chief Rabbi is on record in the *Jewish Chronicle* congratulating Irving Berlin for his election.

Another extraordinary perch came Berlin's way in the Soviet Union, during the period between the end of World War II and the return of Stalin to his reign of terror. He was an attaché in the British Embassy in Moscow and met the great, embattled figures of Russian literature. Looking at Berlin's life, indeed, one feels that he has met everyone worth meeting: Freud and Virginia Woolf, Stravinsky, Akhmatova and Pasternak, Nehru, Eliot, Toscanini, Churchill, Auden, Malraux, Edmund Wilson and Bertrand Russell (Russell: "These characters in the Bible are dreadful people." Berlin: "What have you against Jonathan?" Russell: "Come to think of it, I rather like Jezebel. She reminds me of many modern young women of today"), not to mention the major and minor deities of politics and society.

And so, given his prodigious memory and his narrative gift, the demand for an autobiography is eminently justified. But Berlin rebuffs such pleas. He claims in his defense that he has already written lengthy personal impressions, now collected in a book, and that everything he had to tell is there. But it is precisely the existence of *Personal Impressions* that leaves one with a taste for more. One wishes to know more, surely, about the "old Menshevik" Rachmilewitch, of whom Berlin says that he was the purest intellectual he ever met, and influenced him more than anyone else. He met him in London when he was 16, and it was Rachmilewitch who did much to open before him the great panorama of music (Berlin's first published article was about Verdi), Kant, Marx, the radical thought of Russia during the nineteenth century, and philosophies of science: the life of the mind in all its aspects.

Berlin also claims—it is his last line of defense—that he is not sufficiently interested in himself to write his own biography. This is not an affectation; it is sincere, and it cuts deep. But it puts me in mind of Nietzsche's comment that the basic feature of a great psychologist is a lack of curiosity in himself. This, of course, was long before our psychological age. The philosopher was thinking of a person, usually a writer, who has the power of imagination to enter into the minds of other people; and this, too, is one of Berlin's great skills.

Courtesy Marlborough Gallery

ISAIAH BERLIN BY R.B. KITAJ

Indeed, the problem of empathy has been one of the lasting preoccupations of Berlin's work. For him, there is an essential difference between scientific understanding and the understanding of human affairs. To understand history, religion, culture and literature, one needs to understand people. Berlin traces these types of understanding to the writings of the thinkers he has done so much to rescue from oblivion, Vico, Herder and Hamann. Berlin is himself one of the great *Versteheren*, or "understanders." He is a psychologist of ideas as much as a historian of ideas. He is addicted to the observation of people, and paints their portraits in the subtlest and most vivid hues.

Perhaps the most famous of Berlin's discriminations of human character is the one that he borrowed from the Greek poet Archilochus, between the hedgehog and the fox. "The fox knows many little things, the hedgehog knows one big thing." Thus Tolstoy is a fox (who vainly tried in old age to become a hedgehog) and Dostoyevsky is a hedgehog. Berlin proceeds usefully to classify other thinkers and writers into foxes and hedgehogs. (The philosopher Nelson Goodman once whimsically asked him what would be the proper animal metaphor for one who spends his life knowing one little thing.)

The Berlin memory bank is capable of cashing in any character description for its gold equivalent, namely, an illustrative story or an unforgettable quotation. In what sense was Chaim Weizmann, the leader of the Zionist movement and Berlin's close friend, an ironic man? Well, Berlin will tell Weizmann's last words. When, on his deathbed, he coughed badly and felt choked, Weizmann's doctor told him to spit. "But there is no one to spit at," he replied in Yiddish, and died. It was also Weizmann who said that it is not necessary to be mad in order to be a Zionist, but it helps. Berlin is fond of that latter dictum, but the beautiful profile that he draws of Weizmann emphasizes his hero's normality. He presents him as the perfect non-neurotic Jew, and a great man.

"The great man" is a central category in Berlin's view of history. He is, Berlin believes, someone who is capable of

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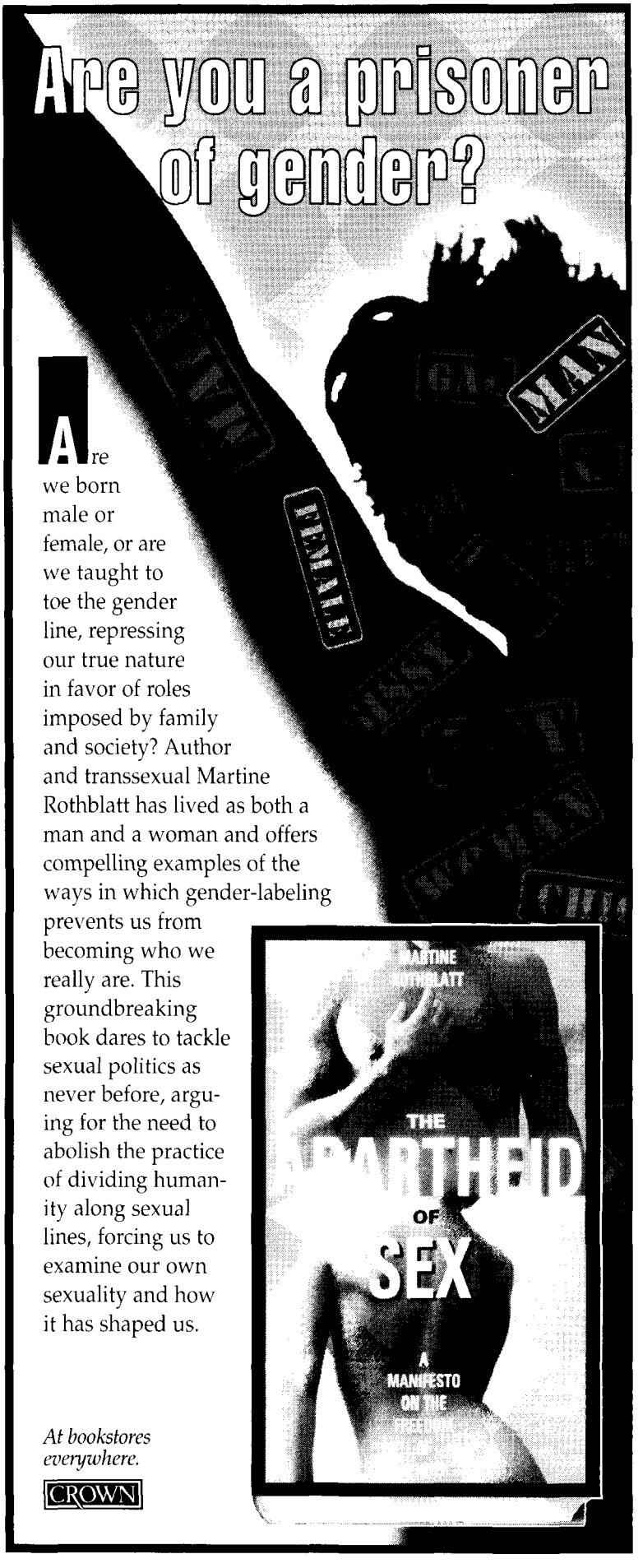
changing our notions of what people can do; someone who, in the public sphere, aims at, and causes, a significant historical change of direction, which would have been regarded as improbable before he acted. Genius, by contrast, is not like greatness. Asked how he managed to leap so high, Nijinsky replied that most people, when they jump, come down at once, "but why not linger in the air a little before coming down?" That is genius, and it shows itself in art, in mathematics, in music, in philosophy, in literature. The action is simple and clear, but the rest of us do not know how to begin to do it. But great men (and women) are doers in the social sphere, and we may follow where they lead. Even monsters such as Stalin or Hitler are, for Berlin, great men; but not Gorbachev, for example, since Gorbachev did not intend the consequences of his actions.

For good or for ill, admirably or contemptibly, a great man may singlehandedly affect the shape of major historical events. In Berlin's hands, however, the idea of the great man is not an expression of elitism. He intends with it, rather, to celebrate the role of the individual in history. Also the role of freedom: Berlin is a famous foe of the idea of historical inevitability. Berlin does not believe in laws of history that determine every historical event. A historian is not a scientist. In contrast with the scientist, who endeavors to discover underlying similarities between apparently disparate phenomena, the historian strives to highlight what is unique about an age or an event.

Unlike other philosophers, Berlin is concerned not only with the sense of a great idea, but also with its sensibility. He studies the systematic connection between an idea and the feelings that are attached to it, such as the connection between the idea of nationalism and the sentiment of belonging. For this reason, Berlin's heroes are not only those who have enriched our thought, but also those who have contributed to our culture. His deep interest in the Romantic movement, and especially in the conceptions of will and of genius that are central to it, springs partly from the recognition of their crucial impact on our shared sensibility. To make sense of an idea, one turns to logic and philology. To understand the sensibility of an idea, one turns to empathy, and hence to Berlin.

An intriguing case in point is provided by Berlin's new book, *The Magus of the North* (Farrar, Straus and Giroux), which is devoted to the thought of Georg Hamann, "a God-intoxicated" thinker. Hamann was a contemporary of Kant,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and a fellow citizen of Königsberg. Spiritually, there can be no doubt that Hamann is very distant from Berlin. Hamann's "sleepwalker's certainty," the mysterious, intuitive method of knowledge that is undisturbed by reality, is the complete opposite of Berlin's skepticism, which prizes a robust sense of reality. And yet Berlin understands Hamann so well that he seems to approve of him implicitly, almost.

In the New Testament, the Magi came from the East, led by the bright star of Bethlehem. Hamann, the self-appointed Magus, was led mostly by a pessimistic Paulinian shadow cast on human nature and human reason. According to Hamann, we do not believe for reasons any more than we taste for reasons or smell for reasons. Our heart beats, he says, before our head thinks. And Hamann is attentive to the beats of the heart, especially in religion and poetry. When the head thinks "enlightened" thoughts, such as the immanent, naturalistic idea that one and the same type of explanation holds good for men and minerals, Hamann believes that this head is sick.

The city of Berlin, the Enlightenment city of Lessing and Mendelssohn, was, for Hamann, Babylon. The key to understanding him as a thinker, he declared, was his hatred of Babylon; and the key used by Berlin (the man, not the city) to crack Hamann's enigmatic personality is his penetrating hatred of the Enlightenment. For Berlin, any person who, like Hamann, is nurtured equally by the Bible and by the nonbeliever Hume, deserves cracking. Hamann believed that language is an incarnation of God. I don't know about that; but a reader of *The Magus of the North* will see how ably Berlin has succeeded in fleshing out the life and the thought of Hamann from Hamann's own language, which is notoriously suggestive and obscure. Here are Berlin's conclusions about his subject, and they nicely capture his own voice as well:

> Kant has rightly won the day, but Hamann and his followers express a continual revolt against taking so much blandly for granted, against leaving out so much, perhaps necessarily, but with too little regret, with no qualms, as if what the theory cannot embrace is mere expendable rubbish: psychological idiosyncrasy, oddities and quirks, which theory cannot notice and which in a rational universe will themselves be ironed out, so that the facts will only be such as the infallible theory fits.... His cry came from an outraged sensibility: he spoke as a man of feeling offended by a passion for a cerebral approach; as a moralist who understood that ethics is concerned with relations between real persons (under God as the ultimate ruler whose will they try to obey as his servants); as a man who was offended by the enunciation of principles that claimed a pseudo-scientific objectivity not derived from individual or social experience; as a German humiliated by an arrogant and, it seemed to him, spiritually blind West; as a humble member of a dying social order, trampled by the inhuman tempo of centralization in the political and cultural sphere.... He struck the first blow against the quantified world; his attack was often ill-judged, but he raised some of the greatest issues of our times by refusing to accept their advent.

The reader of this extraordinary book will come to feel that it is finally impossible to understand someone so different from oneself without to some extent identifying with him. And this suspicion about the negative capability of Isaiah Berlin increases when one recalls his affecting account of the dark figure of Joseph de Maistre, one of the founding fathers of fascism. This, at first, is troublesome. How is such empathy possible without some sympathy?

Berlin is liberal through and through, one of the most important liberal thinkers of our time, but he is a particular kind of liberal. He believes in the morality of liberalism, not in its psychology. The psychology of liberalism, which was inherited from the Enlightenment, strikes him as shallow. It is the Counter-Enlightenment (a term that Berlin coined), as it was represented by Hamann and de Maistre, that does more justice to the complexity of the human psyche. It was a shallow but influential assumption of the Enlightenment that all human beings are, in their nature, seekers of happiness, knowledge and justice, and that they are capable of objectively recognizing these ends. But Berlin is no worshiper of human nature. God may have created the animals, but man creates himself.

It is not only for a more compelling psychology that Berlin turns to the Counter-Enlightenment. He also finds in the darker thinkers an important warning about the limits of science. While he does not share Hamann's hostility toward science, he does share Hamann's aversion to scientism, that is, to the pretense that everything can be explained in accordance with the scientific model. Berlin has respect for science, and even for scientists; as the founder and first president of Wolfson College in Oxford, he recruited more scientists, proportionately, than had any of the ancient, illustrious Oxford colleges. But there is a great gulf between respecting science and accepting the ideology of scientism. Scientism hides from us the deep Kantian truth, that "out of timber as crooked as that from which man is made nothing entirely straight can be carved." Within the human sciences, people cannot be expected to be arranged into classifications and patterns governed by natural laws; and certainly they cannot be aligned within a social order built according to a master plan.

I have no doubt that if anyone were to approach Berlin in the ancient rabbinic way, with the request that he should teach all there is to know while standing on one foot, he would receive in reply Kant's adage about the crooked timber. The fact that it is impossible to "straighten" people is, for Berlin, a source of joy, not a source of gloom. He is happy about human diversity. And so he is skeptical about progress as the march of humanity toward a well-defined goal, and prefers what his contemporary Karl Popper described as piecemeal engineering, that is, mending and improving upon those areas of human activity in which we may be able to predict the outcome of our deeds. Such areas may include health, or education, or the Tennessee Valley project. Berlin was acquainted with, and impressed by, the New Deal and the New Dealers, and counted some of them, notably Felix Frankfurter, among his friends. For Berlin, the America of the New Deal was America at its best; and he never shared the Oxonian suspicion of things American as vulgar.

Berlin's special sort of liberalism emerged from his recognition that not all values are commensurable. Not even in utopia can harmony reign among all values. Equality and freedom, for example, are bound to clash. Since no single form of life can give expression to all the values that we respect, it is important that forms of life different from our own flourish. Without diverse forms of life, we will all be poorer. Only a liberal society among all societies can do justice to diversity. In Herder's simile, later perverted by Mao, this is the garden in which the greatest number of flowers will bloom.

Among Berlin's many famous essays, his inaugural lecture at Oxford in 1958 on "Two Concepts of Liberty" is the most famous. In that remarkable discussion, he draws a contrast between negative liberty, which is your liberty from my interference in your actions, and positive liberty, which is your liberty to realize your "real interests." Positive liberty may become positively dangerous when negative liberty is denied in the name of "real interests," which are usually defined by others. This is not to say that Berlin is a libertarian. For libertarians,

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liberalism is based solely on negative liberty. For Berlin, negative liberty is only one justification for liberalism. Pluralism is the other. And liberty is a necessary condition of pluralism.

Two good things have happened to Berlin in recent years that saved him from becoming a figure of the past, a member merely of the generation that Noel Annan described in *Our Age.* The first was the collapse of the Soviet Union. This was bad news for the Sovietologists, who lost their subject, but for Berlin the fall of the Soviet Union has returned to center-stage the subjects that have always preoccupied him: nationalism, pluralism, liberalism, Russia.

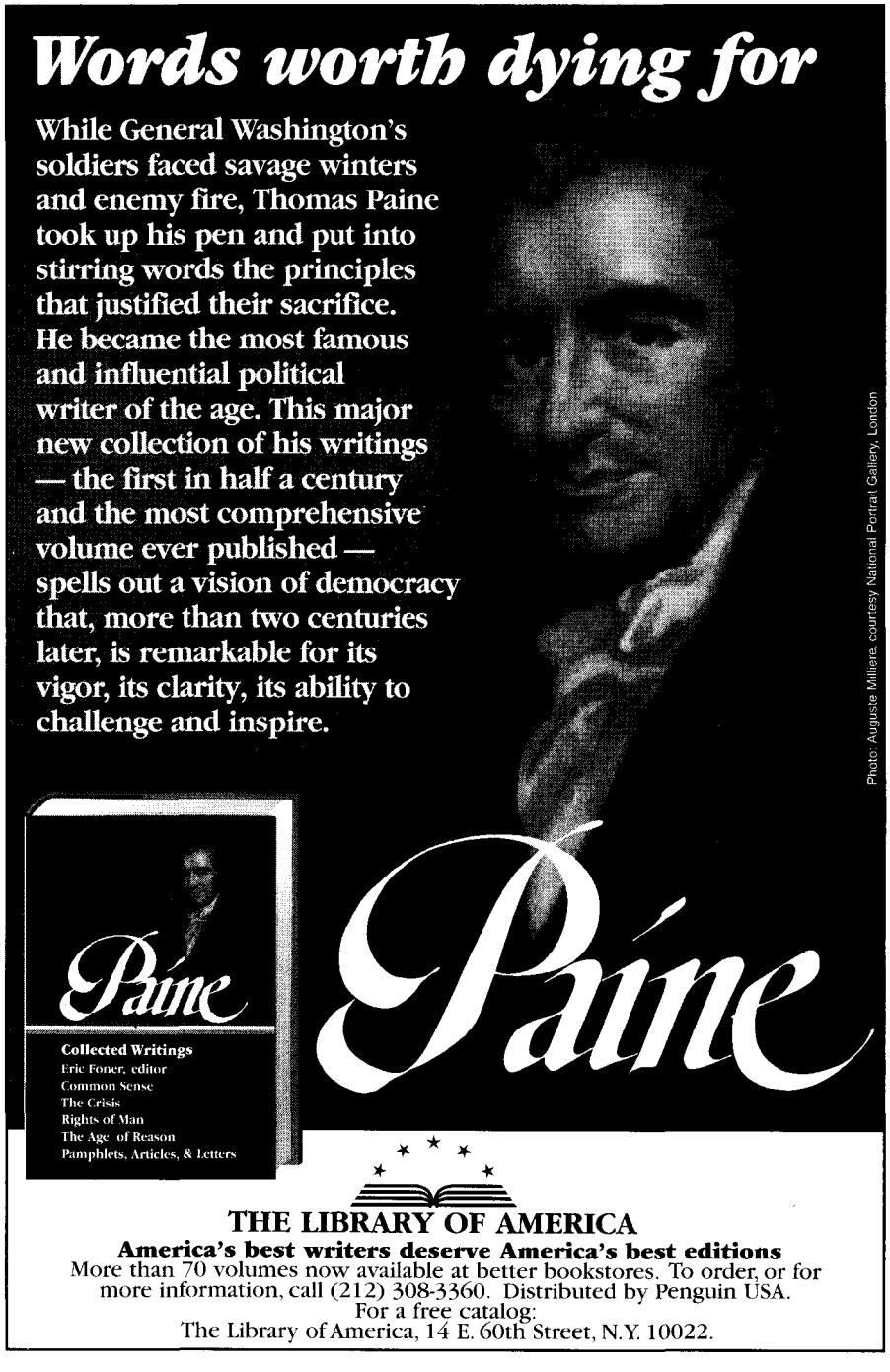
Berlin likes to remark upon a curious historical fact. The "prophetic" thinkers of the nineteenth century predicted some important developments of our century: revolutions in the Third World (Bakunin), conformism in democratic societies (Tocqueville), the central role of the military-industrial complex (Burckhardt), the concentration of capital and the effect of technological innovations (Marx). Yet all of them believed that nationalism was on the wane. But Berlin, who shuns prophecy, has always assigned supreme importance to nationalism, and to the hold of nationalist feelings over people. He prefers to think of nationalism in Herder's terms, as cultural nationalism, which is based on the idea that one's humanity finds its best expression in one's particular culture.

In Berlin's world, there is room for different cultures, and there is no need for rivalry among them. Herderian nationalism is the embodiment of pluralism among nations. At the same time Berlin does not deny the realities of political nationalism, and the "bad" versions of it that are based on theories of superiority and hatred toward the other. Yet he insists that a worldview that does not heed the intensity of nationalist feelings, good or bad, is bound to be irrelevant. How to deal with nationalism is, for Berlin, the central question that liberals should be asking themselves these days.

The second good thing that happened to Berlin in recent years was the publication of his collected writings, some of which originally appeared in esoteric and inaccessible publications. The appearance of his writings in many volumes (edited by the industrious Henry Hardy) refuted the myth that he will leave just an oral legacy. Much of the written material was owed to invitations to write and to lecture ("I'm like a taxi driver: I go where I am summoned"), and yet it exhibits an impressive unity of style and purpose. Wittgenstein once said of the genius that "he has a particular kind of lens to concentrate light into a burning point"; and the collected Berlin changes his image from that of a concave lens, which spreads rays of light in all directions, to a convex one. The burning point, in Berlin's case, is the impossibility of harmonizing all human values.

Berlin has been a Zionist all his life. His father once explained the son's attraction to Zionism as an extension of the Hebrew lessons he received as a child, even after the family moved to England. Zionism is the national liberation movement of the Jewish people; and Berlin maintains that it was Zionism that in fact created the Jewish nation. In their two millennia of exile, the Jews lost the crucial features of a nation. They had neither a territory of their own nor a common spoken language, and—since the French Revolution—they even ceased to be a religious community in the traditional way. And yet, although there is no simple definition for the Jewish people, Berlin sees no difficulty in defining the Jews and in recognizing their right to a homeland and their need for freedom from the domination of others.

One drizzly day in Oxford I was walking with Berlin, when suddenly he stopped, waved his umbrella in the air, and asked: "What do you think is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common to all Jews?" He continued to specify, in his customary way: "I mean, to the Jew from San'a, from Marrakech, from Riga, from Glasgow?" And right away he answered his own question: "A sense of social unease. Nowhere do almost all Jews feel entirely at home." Unlike Herder, Berlin tends to identify the need of belonging to a group with the urge to feel at home; and the absence of such a need results in the life of the stranger. "But you yourself are a counter-example," I said. "Surely you feel at home in England." "Yes and no," was his reply. "I am a devoted Anglophile, not an Englishman."

In one important sense, Zionism has been, for Berlin, a success story. It succeeded in giving the Jewish inhabitants of Israel a home, and a sense of home. For Berlin, the Jewish people are an extended family, not a spiritual community dedicated to Judaism. His feeling of solidarity with his fellow Jews is basic, spontaneous and unapologetic. It is a family tie. As in a family, there are black sheep, whom Berlin is good at spotting, and there are always embarrassing and irritating relatives. The concern for the family, however, is first and foremost a concern for the welfare of its members, for preventing the suffering and the persecution that have been their lot for so long just because of their Jewishness. Berlin believes that there is truth in the historian Lewis Namier's dubious remark that "there is no modern Jewish history, only a Jewish martyrology." But Berlin is no romantic of suffering, and he sees no glory in martyrdom.

Berlin is not a religious man, and he shows no trace especially of the religious feeling that the Jews are the chosen people. More interesting, he betrays no secular version of this sentiment. But he does feel strongly that the Jews are an old, interesting and somewhat neurotic family, and he has no patience for Jews who are estranged from their people. In private conversations he is quite fond of unmasking Jews who deny their identity. For him, even Lenin's maternal grandfather falls under faint suspicion.

Berlin's own family is old and intriguing. He is a direct descendant of Shneor Zalman of Liadi, the founder of the Hasidic dynasty of Lubavitch at the time of the Napoleonic wars. He is the second cousin of the late Lubavitcher Rebbe Menachem Schneerson, the one whose followers in Brooklyn and elsewhere declared him to be the Messiah. (Yehudi Menuhin belongs to another branch of the same family tree.) His wife Aline, too, has an old and no less fascinating pedigree. She was born into the family of the Barons de Ginsbourg, who distinguished themselves for three generations, up until the Russian Revolution, as grand bankers in Russia and in Paris, and were prominent in Jewish diplomacy during the pogroms against the Jews in the days of the Czars; they were also among the most pre-eminent philanthropic families in the modern history of the Jews.

One of Berlin's earliest childhood memories is the wedding of his aunt to Isaac Landoberg. Isaac Landoberg later became Yitzhak Sadeh, who is a legend in Israel. Like Garibaldi, who founded the Red Shirts, Sadeh founded the Palmach, the striking forces of the Haganah, the main Jewish underground organization in Palestine and the forerunner of the Israeli Defense Forces. These units eventually played a decisive role in Israel's War of Independence in 1948. Sadeh was not only a general, but also a writer and an essayist. In his early days in Russia, however, he was a boxer, a wrestler and an avid footballer, as well as a painters' model and an art dealer: a pagan, in sum. During the Russian Revolution he came to Petrograd, as a Social Revolutionary officer, to visit the Berlins. Berlin's mother was so terrified of his huge Mauser pistol that she took it from him and put it away in a bowl of cold water, lest it explode. Eventually Sadeh managed to switch sides in the revolution, and served with the White Army; but he ended his life, in Israel, as a pro-Soviet romantic socialist. In Berlin's eyes, he remained an enchanting adventurer.

On one of Berlin's visits to Palestine, in late 1947, he met Sadeh again. Those were the last days of the British Mandate rule in Palestine, days of rampant terror. Sadeh, who was on the British authorities' wanted list, met Berlin at the back of a Tel Aviv café. That visit in Palestine, just like the early memories from the streets of Petrograd, bred in Berlin a profound aversion to terror. Berlin is not a pacifist (he was opposed to the Munich agreement, which was popular in Britain at the time), but he detested the methods of Begin's and Shamir's underground, and his attitude did not change when they became prime ministers of Israel.

But it was also that visit to Palestine which strengthened his emotional ties to Sadeh. A strong family feeling is, for Berlin, one of the "primary colors" of human emotion. And Berlin has a deep interest in human emotion, despite the fact that by far the greatest part of his adult life was spent at Oxford, where the the most popular emotion seems to be embarrassment, or the need to avoid it. I do not mean to exaggerate Berlin's "Russian soul." He is a calm and subtle and rational man, who is nourished by much more than the primary colors. And yet the intensity of his intellectual interest in human feeling is remarkable. And so it is no wonder that he has translated Turgenev's *First Love*, which he believes contains the most perfect description of falling in love for the first time, and also Turgenev's play *A Month in the Country*, which deals with the same theme. (The play was produced in Berlin's translation in London in 1981.)

But it is to opera, above all, that Berlin turns for the strongest and purest of the human emotions; and he finds them in Verdi, not in Wagner. One glance at him, returning from the beach to his home atop the hill above Paraggi, near Portofino, walking the steep climb like a teenager with the Walkman adorning his head, and accompanying the music with a conductor's wave of the finger or an occasional humming of a tune, will convince anyone that this is an opera junkie who requires his shot in the ears in ever-increasing daily doses. In a revealing remark, he once confessed that it was his friendship with the pianist Alfred Brendel that opened his eyes to the dimension of tragedy in the music of the Romantics. Berlin is not blind to the tragic, but it does not come naturally to him.

"All my life I have been greatly overestimated," I have often heard him say. And then, "I am all for it. Long may it last." I am convinced, however, that as a philosopher Berlin has been underestimated. True, his contributions to political philosophy and to the history of ideas have won much admiration, but not so his contribution to general philosophy, and especially to the important current in twentieth-century thought known as analytic philosophy.

Analytic philosophy is based on the notion that many traditional philosophical problems can be solved, or rather dissolved, by means of linguistic analysis, which will expose the illusory nature of the problems themselves. There were two main directions in analytical philosophy. One was that of the logical positivists of Vienna, who dealt with constructed or artificial languages, that is, with mathematics, logic and the language of science. The other maintained that philosophy should turn its attention to natural languages, the languages that are used by ordinary people, since it is within those languages that philosophical problems arise. The center of "ordinary language philosophy" in the postwar years was Oxford, and the person whose name is most identified with this trend in Oxford was the charismatic J. L. Austin, Berlin's colleague and friend at All Souls College.

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What goes generally unacknowledged is Berlin's own contribution to the formation of this influential current in twentieth-century philosophy. It was in his rooms at All Souls during the '30s that the group of "founding fathers" would meet. The business on the table there, as well as in similar rooms in Vienna and Cambridge (where Wittgenstein and his disciples toiled) was the discovery of a criterion that can distinguish among significant sentences, such as scientific ones, and meaningless sentences, such as metaphysical and theological ones. And the proposal under examination was known as the "verification principle," or the idea that a sentence is meaningful only if it can, in principle, be verified.

Does it make sense to say that my toothache is more painful than yours? And, if it does make sense, are we to infer that I ascribe a mind to you, the states of which I can directly verify? With this question at the center of his paper, Berlin entered the lion's—that is, Wittgenstein's—den in Cambridge. By the time it was over, Wittgenstein had subjected him to an hour and a half of fierce cross-examination, with all the others mute and dumb. He then strode toward Berlin, shook his hand, thanked him for the lecture and pronounced that they had a good discussion. Like Daniel, Berlin left the lair unscathed. The master had approved.

But Berlin was soon disenchanted with the linguistic turn in philosophy. In one of his essays he refers to Tolstoy's pedagogical tour in Germany, to his report of one incident in particular, in which the teacher showed his pupils a progressive textbook with pictures of fish and asked them what they see. "A fish," responded the brightest boy. "No," said the teacher, and proceeded relentlessly to torture the class until finally he extracted the intended answer, which was that they saw not a fish but a picture that represents a fish. For Tolstoy, this was a farcical sort of pedantry, and it is not hard to sense Berlin's identification with Tolstoy's disapprobation. The linguistic turn in philosophy was based precisely on the distinction that the teacher tried so to extract from his pupils, the distinction between an object and its representation. To Berlin, this has always seemed a little fishy.

I suspect that Berlin, so happily attached to the real world, was always ambivalent toward the concerns of philosophy proper. I can see him writing what Hamann wrote to Kant (he quotes this in *The Magus of the North*): "I look on the best demonstration in philosophy as the sensible girl looks on a love letter," that is, with both pleasure and suspicion. It was perhaps this ambivalence that masked Berlin's significant role in the analytical philosophy of his time. But finally he abandoned it, for the views and the personalities of the great Russian intellectuals—Herzen, Turgenev, Bakunin, Belinsky, Nekrasov. They had an enormous impact on him. His study of them has dominated his life even more, perhaps, than music.

Berlin has, curiously, very few enemies. For many years he has held powerful academic positions, yet people love to love him. When the *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* sent him its well-known questionnaire, his answer to the question "What are your faults?" was "I am too anxious to please." (His answer to the question "Who would you like to have been?" was "Alexander Herzen.") In an essay on slavery and the emancipation of the Jews, Berlin ascribes the tendency toward ingratiation to Jews newly out of the ghetto. Being eager to please, however, does not make one universally liked; and so the explanation for the universal admiration of Berlin must be sought elsewhere.

It is not far to seek. Berlin is so beloved because he is slow to judge, and so forgiving of faults and foibles, so utterly lacking in malice. Many who have met him, even briefly, have felt an instant familiarity. Once, at a dinner in Paris, Berlin was seated next to Lauren Bacall. She asked him where he lived. "Oxford," he said. "Then perhaps," she asked, "you know my Oxford friend Isaiah Berlin?" "I am he," he replied. She was not the only one who, upon meeting this unforgettable man, felt instinctively and immediately close. •

The myths of Robert Louis Stevenson.

The Artist-Adventurer

By Richard Jenkyns

We know so much about Robert Louis Stevenson's life, and yet so little. The external facts are very well documented, thanks partly to the records of his friends and his wife's family, and partly to his letters, now admirably edited by Ernest Mehew, carrying on a work begun by Bradford A. Booth many years ago. (Four volumes have now appeared, and four more are to come; the total number of letters will be around 2,800, of which more than half have never before been published.) Stevenson's life was remarkable. He was perhaps the first example of the novelist as adventurer, a doubly striking achievement in that he was not, like Hemingway, a broad-shouldered blusterer but a chronic invalid. He was born in Edinburgh in 1850, the only child of comfortably bourgeois parents. He was not precocious, and in his early 20s we observe in him some of the classic signs of adolescent rebellion: the failure to settle into a career either as an engineer or as a lawyer, a difficult relationship with his father, the affectation of bohemian style and clothing, a bit of whoring (which he seems to have regarded as glamorously depraved, though it is hard to think that it was particularly unusual), a priggish declaration to his parents that he no longer believed in the doctrines of Christianity (which caused deep distress to his Calvinist father, as he must surely have known it would). Henry James, who liked him, thought him at this time "a good deal (in an inoffensive way) of a poseur." Already his health was poor.

His early writings—essays and miscellaneous journalism—have not worn well. That arch, self-conscious manner that is the bane of the nineteenth-century essay is all too visible. Stevenson's first real success (on a modest scale, to be sure) came in 1879, with *Travels with a Donkey in the Cévennes*. Though one may admire the ingenuity of getting a book

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The Complete Short Stories
by Robert Louis Stevenson
edited and introduced by Ian Bell
(Henry Holt, 2 vols., 928 pp., $50)

Robert Louis Stevenson: A Biography
by Frank McLynn
(Random House, 567 pp., $30)

The Letters of Robert Louis Stevenson
edited by Bradford A. Booth and Ernest Mehew
(Yale University Press, Vol. I, 525 pp., Vol. II, 352 pp., Vol. III, 372 pp. Vol. IV, 326 pp., each $45)

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out of a fortnight's French holiday, it is not a work that anyone would bother with nowadays but for its author's later fame. If we look at him in his later 20s, a sickly young man of no fixed abode with one or two short stories of varied quality to his credit, behind him a trail of literary projects begun and given up, and a penchant for *amitiés amoureuses* with older women, it would have seemed reasonable to predict that nothing much would ever come of him—reasonable, but completely wrong.

In 1876, at Grez-sur-Loing near the Forest of Fontainebleau, he met Fanny Osbourne, a married American ten years his senior, separated from her feckless husband. They became lovers, but she broke off the affair and went back to her husband. Virtually penniless, and without a word to his family, Stevenson then pursued her to California, crossing America by train in dreadful health and appalling conditions, arriving in San Francisco half dead. Fanny yielded and got a divorce; they spent their honeymoon in a deserted shack in the Silverado Mountains. Stevenson's worried father now capitulated and offered him an allowance. This and increasing literary success enabled him to live a seminomadic life. He and Fanny lived in Davos in Switzerland, where the mountain air was supposed to be good for consumptives (though whether his illness was really consumption is uncertain), in Montpellier, on the Riviera and at Bournemouth on the English south coast (this to be counted perhaps among his exotic adventures, since he once claimed that for a Scot southern England was more foreign than continental Europe or America). *Treasure Island* (1883) made his name, *Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* (1886) confirmed it and from then on he was a profitable celebrity.

Stevenson's later wanderings were more far-flung. Accompanied by a motley crew of hangers-on, his wife's daughter, wastrel son and shiftless son-in-law and Stevenson's own widowed mother (one would like to know more about this shadowy but surely gallant character), he moved back to America, first to the Adirondacks and then to San Francisco again. There he hired a boat and began his travels over the wide waters of the Pacific. This was a venturesome business: to judge from Frank McLynn's account, he and his party were at some risk of death or disaster from storms or piracy. They fetched up first on Hawaii, and finally on Samoa. And so began the last and most famous phase of his life: as Tusitala, the teller of tales, sage, counselor and thaumaturge. By now he was possibly the most famous living writer in the world. He died suddenly of a hemorrhage in 1894. He was 44 years old.

A fascinating life, then, and one much written about—but the man himself remains surprisingly opaque. In photographs, he looks like a man from nowhere, or from no determinate time. The long thin face, the drooping mustache, the open shirt and breeches and the sash round his waist—that is Stevenson in the 1880s, but it could be a figure from forty or seventy years later. He is a lively and fertile letter-writer, but he changes character depending on the friend with whom he is corresponding—facetious and whimsical to one, straightforward to another, confiding to a third. From the letters of Byron, Jane Austen or Virginia Woolf we get a distinct sense of personality; from Stevenson's we do not.

He is nonetheless a fine letter-writer. In one of his letters to the poet W. E. Henley he praises *Martin Chuzzlewit* to the skies, ending, "And the whole book written with so high a gusto." The same might be said of himself: even when he is gloomy and despondent, he is despondent with a kind of lavishness. Henley brought out his wildest spirit of fantasy: these letters are full of dialect and doggerel and a lot of showing off and at times some excellent jokes. In one letter he proposes that they compile a "comic Bunctionary" (much like Flaubert's *Dictionnaire des Idées Reçues*), and offers some definitions: "Adam—the cultivator of the garden of Eden, accused of petty larceny ... Arnold, Matthew—A man with eyeglasses ... Theft—a name for kleptomania in the poor."

The letters also tell us a good deal about his literary formation. His tastes were an odd mixture of the highbrow and the lower-middlebrow, his judgments sometimes acute, sometimes bizarre. He adores Meredith, above all *The Egoist*; Augustine's confessions are Shakespearean in depth; Wilde's poems are a disappointment, and not even indecent. Daudet is the finest of living French novelists, Zola rotten, Balzac astoundingly feeble and tedious. William Morris's *Sigurd the Volsung* is a "grrrrreat poem." *Pride and Prejudice* is actually a better novel than Blackmore's *Cristowell*, but he enjoys the latter more.

Sometimes Stevenson practices the art of what Stephen Potter called "lowbrowmanship." One of the definitions in his comic dictionary is "Culture—an attitude of mind, the state of consciousness of the ignorance of others. An aversion to mild ale and tobacco." And in another letter to Henley he writes disparagingly of high art:

> Igh artises can go to blazes. I like low art myself. I like the *Newgate Calendar*, and Fortune, and *La Grande Duchesse*, and Hazlitt, and now and then I don't dislike myself even. Igh art is good. I am with you there; but its component qualities exist separate and still please me in inferior work.

That last remark is interesting: for a moment the relentless facetiousness lets up, and we get a glimpse of his idea of his own art and its possibilities.

The facetious tone makes his comments on his work hard to judge. All too often the comic self-deprecation gets in the way. *The Pavilion on the Links* is "grand carpentry story in nine chapters," a "blood and thunder story"; "*Requiem* is a beayootiful poem by me," the medievalisms of the *The Black Arrow* are "tushery" (a favorite joke word, and likely as not he did consider the book a potboiler). Occasionally his true opinion is unmistakable, when he defends a favorite story against the criticisms of others. Most revealing are various comments to his father during the writing of *Treasure Island*. In one letter we find him rewriting the later parts of the book, lightening it and drying it out. In another he confesses that the treatment of Ben Gunn has gone astray: he had meant to develop him more, but this had not worked out. But when his father criticizes Long John Silver, he defends himself vigorously: the later developments of Silver are just about the best thing in the book. Here we have not only sincerity, but some peeps in the artist's workshop.

There have been extreme disagreements about his wife. McLynn's picture is relentlessly hostile, even her efforts to get on good terms with Stevenson's father, surely a sensible thing for any new daughter-in-law to do, being held against her. Unfortunately we have very few letters from her husband to her. Perhaps she, too, is now impossible to judge.

But Stevenson's odyssey, intriguing though it is, draws our attention today because of his books. How far were they the product of his origins and experience? Perhaps it is more than a tautology to say that he was not especially Scottish, except when he was. He was certainly a patriotic Scot, devoted to his native land—maybe like many other exiles, more patriotic at a distance. And he wrote Scots dialect brilliantly, most notably in the ghost story *Thrawn Janet*, judged by Henry James "a masterpiece in thirteen pages," and in the dialogue of *Weir of Hermiston*.

But he stands at the opposite pole from those writers who can only write from their own experiences. Several of his stories are told by narrators who are strikingly unlike himself: the timid,

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deferential Ephraim Mackellar in *The Master of Ballantrae,* the pious David Balfour in *Kidnapped* and *Catriona,* the rough, uneducated drifter John Wiltshire in *The Beach of Falesá.* Some of his best books are set in the eighteenth century: *Treasure Island,* of course, and again *Kidnapped, Catriona* and *The Master of Ballantrae.* He wrote hardly at all about the urban, cultured, industrialized Scotland in which he grew up (though Chesterton suggested that the setting of *Jekyll and Hyde,* actually London, feels more like Edinburgh). No one has written better about Scotland, but his Scotland is, like the eighteenth century, a place for the imagination to inhabit. He re-creates a rural, clan-based Jacobite society that had vanished long before he was born. *Weir of Hermiston* is a partial exception: much of it is set in Edinburgh, in the early years of the nineteenth century, but it depicts a dark, savage world already remote by the 1890s.

Stevenson refuses to fit into the conventional pigeonholes of Victorian literature. In an age when novels were still liable to be loose baggy monsters, he never wrote a long book. Some of his best works were novellas, and Ian Bell's edition of the short stories includes such extended pieces as *Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* and *The Beach of Falesá.* Even his full-dress novels sometimes seem like novellas expanded, through the concentration and compression of their subjects. *Kidnapped* is the story of a single misadventure, and its entire action occupies only a few weeks. By contrast, the action of *The Master of Ballantrae* spreads across three continents and many years, and yet even this is fundamentally a single story, without subplots: the history of the bitter conflict between two brothers, until the death of both. The story's ending is indicated to us at the beginning; that, too, is a technique more characteristic of the short story than the novel.

Weir of Hermiston, the fragment on which he was working on the last day of his life, is his best candidate for a novel in the "great tradition." The portrait of the judge Lord Hermiston, grim, coarse but clever, and his relationship with his sensitive, high-minded son Archie Weir is magnificently done. Some think that this is Stevenson's masterpiece for its tautness, darkness and psychological penetration; others that it would have deteriorated had he lived to complete it. Apparently he contemplated having Archie tried for his life before his father and sentenced to death. One must hope that he would have abandoned this idea, both because it would have been a legal impossibility and because its melodramatic quality would have been at odds with the serious somber naturalism of the rest.

Weir of Hermiston is uncharacteristic of Stevenson and characteristic of the later-Victorian art novel in its pursuit of the sustained psychological investigation of individuals. Usually that is not his concern; he is the master of external impressions. That is not to say that he was uninterested in character. On the contrary, his delineations of people are quick, living and sometimes subtle. But whereas the psychological intricacies of George Eliot, Meredith or Henry James require

an omniscient author who can penetrate the arcana of the mind, it is perhaps no accident that so many of Stevenson's stories are told in the first person by narrators who see others keenly, but necessarily from the outside. That is how in fact we do know other people, and Stevenson clearly has a sense of truth to nature. *Kidnapped* beautifully conveys what it feels like to be lost, miserable and frightened. When David Balfour is shipwrecked on a barren island, he is wet, confused, unable to cope—indeed he contrasts himself ruefully with Robinson Crusoe, to whom the inconvenience of life came so readily to hand. The scene of the quarrel and the reconciliation between David Balfour and Alan Breck Steward was rightly admired by Henry James. We realize that Alan Breck, for all his gallant, swaggering charm, is something of a strain to live with after a time, and we realize that Balfour, who has seemed pretty resilient, is near the end of his tether; and, as he breaks down, we also realize, poignantly, that he is not much more than a child. But though David is attracted to Alan Breck, he will never penetrate beyond his outward character. At the end of the book their parting seems a psychological as well as a practical necessity. Their mutual liking has been like those friendships between hostages in Beirut—genuine enough, but with nothing to sustain them once the crisis is over. David, the narrator, warms to Alan Breck, but in some sense he will never know what makes him tick; life is like that.

Stevenson is famous as a writer for boys. He was not, though, an especially good writer for smaller children. Perhaps *A Child's Garden of Verses* has a kind of pallid charm, but it is too knowingly whimsical:

> When I am grown to man's estate
> I shall be very proud and great,
> And tell the other girls
> and boys
> Not to meddle with my toys.

"Grown to man's estate" is quite the wrong tone; but anyway, this is the sort of cute thing that adults want to hear children saying, not the sort of thing they actually say. When children play at being grown-ups, they fancy themselves behaving in a grown-up manner, not childishly.

That is one of the glories of *Treasure Island:* Jim Hawkins has to take on the perils and the responsibilities of a full-grown man. And while *A Child's Garden of Verses* condescends, *Treasure Island* does not. It is rather a literary novel for the young, with a fair amount of technical language that might puzzle anyone—adults as well—not having a reasonable knowledge of sailing ships. But it does not matter. The sheer force of the narrative drives the adventure forward. This book has the quality of a myth: the tale of pirates and buried treasure on a tropical island seems to have existed from time immemorial—it feels like a folktale, the common possession of the race.

Like other myths, it has been subjected to the analysis of the learned. McLynn expatiates on this theme:

> A metaphor for alienation and for the principle of imagination as against reality, an island is the perfect spatial focus for the anxiety of the lonely parentless youth.... In some psychoanalytical literature the

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> foetus is interpreted as an island surrounded by an amniotic moat ... dialectic between good and bad islands, between regression and responsibility....

After a page or two of this, one longs to shout out, "Hey, no, it's a book about buried treasure." And Stevenson, at least, would agree. When he was starting work on the book, he wrote to a friend,

> If this don't fetch the kids, why, they have gone rotten since my day. Will you be surprised to hear that it is about Buccaneers..., that it's all about a map, and a treasure and a mutiny..., and a seacook with one leg, and a sea-song with the chorus "Yo-ho-ho and a bottle of rum."

It is fascinating that the pirates' chorus was such an early and basic part of Stevenson's conception. We all know those words: they are so instantly memorable, so exactly right. *Treasure Island* is full of these unforgettable motifs: Blind Pew, the black spot, Silver's wooden leg, the parrot with his cry of "pieces of eight." Once again, the mythic talent. And maybe the book is like a myth in another sense, too: if people want to speculate about alienation and amniotic moats, they can. If you were able to tell the Dinka or the Yanomani what anthropologists were saying about the meaning of their tales, they would look pretty surprised. Yet it is the nature of myths to have a direct appeal, and yet to leave a space for the lucubrations of the learned.

Treasure Island is also lifted by having a first-rate character in Silver himself. We all think we know Long John: a gnarled old sea-dog with a grizzled beard, a peg-leg and a bird on his shoulder, growling nautical oaths in a Mummerset accent. Actually, in the book he is not much like that at all. The myth has escaped beyond the control of its creator. Stevenson's Silver is amiable, smooth-tongued and pleasant-tempered, with a pale smiling face as big as a ham—the more threatening for his ingratiating surface. And Stevenson also has the wit to show Silver and his gang, unlike the fearless, limitlessly resourceful supervillains of modern films and thrillers, as themselves frightened and uncertain—more real, more unpredictable and thus ultimately more alarming. Most unexpectedly of all, Silver develops. His show of affection toward Jim Hawkings begins as a blind, but it becomes real, and the tension is heightened by the unstable mixture of alliance and enmity that grows between the pirate and the cabin boy.

Stevenson's most famous myth, of course, is *Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde.* In one respect it is hard to judge this story, since no one ever reads it without knowing the solution to the mystery in advance. Time has proved the power of its central idea, but in some ways it falls short of his best work. Perhaps the main weakness in it is that, although it conveys a sense of unease and menace (Stevenson was always a master at that), it does not adequately convey a sense of evil. What are the wicked things that we see Hyde doing? He knocks over a girl and rushes on without stopping; and he murders a stranger, an old gentleman whom he encounters in the street. Perhaps the knocking down of the girl substitutes for rape or sexual assault, which Stevenson could not openly describe, but that is not a sufficient exculpation. The murder suggests lunacy or moral imbecility, not the corrupted desires of an intelligent man.

It was a mistake to make Hyde a stunted figure, a man who gives an impression of deformity. Stevenson's Hyde is not the pantomime monstrosity that he becomes in the many films that have been made of the story, but all the same physical ugliness is allowed to usurp the place of moral ugliness (we are repeatedly told that Hyde exudes an indescribable air of evil, but the problem is just that—the fact that it is not described). And the attempt at moral analysis that Stevenson tacks on to the end of the story in "Henry Jekyll's full statement of the case" jars with the essentially melodramatic character of what has gone before. Stevenson's myth is more powerful than his telling of it. But that is, in a way, his strength: the story pattern feels as archetypal as those of Oedipus or Little Red Riding Hood, and it is known to millions who could not name its author and hardly think of it as having a determinate origin.

Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde has encouraged critics to claim that Stevenson was constantly occupied with the idea of duality. Still, as with *Treasure Island,* the characters are not quite what they have become in the popular imagination. Jekyll and Hyde are not meant to be antithetical, good versus evil. Jekyll is, rather, a man of mixed impulses, who had a hidden life before he ever began his chemical experiments. And the potion acts upon moral qualities that are already present: it can turn the decent man into a saint, the selfish man into a monster. It is only because the worse side of Jekyll was uppermost when he first drank the potion that Hyde is evil. There is some confusion, perhaps, in the text itself. The narrative effectively presents Hyde as a demonic possession taking Jekyll over from outside, but Stevenson meant him to be an intensification of what was already present in Jekyll's moral character.

The idea of duality is inadequate as a key to this story; applied to other works, it seems limiting and inaccurate. McLynn, like others before him, applies it to *Kidnapped* and *The Master of Ballantrae,* at the cost of flattening them out. A subtlety of *The Master of Ballantrae* is that the contrast between decent, cautious Henry and his brother James, the bold, wicked Master, is not all that it seems. Mackellar reflects that James could not have been such a bad man if he had not had the machinery of a good one; Henry, for his part, is corrupted by a rivalry that turns to hatred. As the story progresses, a hereditary likeness between the two apparent opposites emerges. Mackellar notices on Henry's face "that grim smile ... that was a little like the Master's." The cruel Master himself, on an occasion when Henry has worsted him, confesses, "Blood will out; and you have certainly a choice idea of how to make yourself unpleasant." So the book itself suggests that to see the two men as opposites, as types, is to have been too superficial: they are individuals, not symbols, very different indeed, and yet with resemblances formed from heredity and circumstance.

Of *Kidnapped* McLynn writes, "So David Balfour versus Alan Breck comes to symbolize the Covenanter tradition against the Jacobite, realism against romance, the Edinburgh of the Enlightenment against the old Scotia of the clans." The looseness of this is its own refutation: no one can represent two such very different things as Enlightened Edinburgh and Covenanting fanaticism. (As a matter of fact, David Balfour is a country boy from the Southern Uplands.) Anyway, to talk academically of symbolism is to spoil Stevenson's story. The man is a master of narrative, and the story lives through its realist portrayal of individuals.

Stevenson has the air of a born writer, with an instinctive gift, but the collected short stories suggest how hard he had to work to achieve his eventual facility. In the early part of his career there are failures and false starts. The allegorical tale *Will o' the Mill* has been admired by some, even extravagantly, for its loftily melancholy and philosophical tone, but its allegory is hopelessly confused, and the later Stevenson called it "cat meat." *The Pavilion on the Links* is the exciting story of a Scottish house under siege from Italian anarchists—this is the Stevenson who so influenced John Buchan—but the mechanism required to get a group of disparate people into the besieged pavilion is creaky. *The Story of a Lie* has a wittily depicted character in the cadging, phony painter Van Tromp, a near cousin of Harold Skimpole, but

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Stevenson could find nothing to do with him except to link him to an anemic and unconvincing love story.

But Ian Bell's collection also contains the finest of Stevenson's Pacific stories, the novella *The Beach of Falesá*. This was bowdlerized when first issued, and Stevenson's original text was not published until 1984. It tells of a trader, John Wiltshire, who fetches up on a Polynesian island and goes through a cynical fake marriage with a native girl for the sake of sex—the Madama Butterfly story. Unlike Pinkerton, however, he becomes fond of his woman, repents and marries her properly. The plot revolves around the sinister machinations of another trader and comes to a dramatic climax in fine boys' adventure style—well managed, but the one slight disappointment in the piece, because the climax is out of tone with the rest. Otherwise, the story is beautifully told.

Wiltshire is a simple, coarse-grained man. Stevenson took a risk here: many novelists have stumbled by inventing narrators at whom both author and readers can look down. But he carries off this difficult trick with complete assurance. McLynn remarks, with some justice, that Stevenson has trouble with his endings (one is tempted to add that it is a trouble that most novelists have shared), but *The Beach of Falesá* ends admirably. Wiltshire's wife is now middle-aged and hugely fat; he has a sense of lost hopes, he knows that domesticity has trapped him on his island for ever, but he has achieved a kind of rough contentment. His last reflections are these:

> My public house? Not a bit of it, nor ever likely; I'm stuck here, I fancy; I don't like to leave the kids, you see; and there's no use talking—they're better off here than what they would be in a white man's country. Though Ben took the eldest up to Auckland, where he's being schooled with the best. But what bothers me is the girls. They're only half castes of course; I know that as well as you do, and there's nobody thinks less of half castes than I do; but they're mine, and about all I've got; I can't reconcile my mind to their taking up with kanakas, and I'd like to know where I'm going to find them whites?

That is touching, because so unsentimental; he loves his children, but he is as robustly racist as ever.

Stevenson had the mysterious gift of memorableness ("Yo-ho-ho . . . "), and some of his scenes, some of his verses echo in the mind like that tune you cannot get out of your head:

> This be the verse you grave for me:
> *Here he lies where he longed to be;*
> *Home is the sailor, home from sea,*
> *And the hunter home from the hill.*

It is hard to say why this strikes so tellingly upon the ear, but it does. It was a sure instinct that led Churchill to quote it in the House of Commons at the end of the Second World War. The words are indeed inscribed on Stevenson's tomb, but wrongly, with the rhythmically inferior "home from *the* sea" in the second to last line. He is an easy writer to enjoy and appreciate, but it does seem difficult to get him quite right. •

The Dirt on Communism

By Gregg Easterbrook

The Fading of the Greens: The Decline of Environmental Politics in the West by Anna Bramwell

(Yale University Press, 224 pp., $25)

Thinking Green! Essays on Environmentalism, Feminism, and Nonviolence by Petra K. Kelly

(Parallax Press, 167 pp., $18)

In 1982 Helmut Schreiber, a West German economist and Solidarity supporter, spirited out of the old Eastern bloc some documents detailing environmental breakdown in the Soviet sphere. He wrote a report that caused a stir in Western Europe, especially on the European left, which had been laboring to avert its eyes from the environmental malfeasance of the Soviet Union. Schreiber's findings helped to convert the incipient European Green movement from its anti-Western fixation to a more thoughtful opposition to ecological malfeasance whatever the source.

By the fall of the Wall in 1989, many Greens had become opponents of the Soviet regime: but it was horror over ecological abuses, rather than horror over human rights, that finally prodded several elements of the European left to let go of their illusions about Moscow. And, by the time the Politburo itself caved in, the Greens' abandonment of traditional European left-labor apologetics for Moscow had become a constructive factor in the Soviet demise: a factor little understood in the United States and only grudgingly noted by many European commentators. Whatever the movement's other faults, it is likely that history will look back with affection on the Green role in the disintegration of Stalin's edifice. The Western European left was among the last bulwarks of support for the old Moscow regime. When the Greens, the leading faction of that element, abandoned Moscow, this signaled the end of the European illusion about Soviet communism.

In the meantime it has become conventional wisdom that the old Eastern bloc is polluted beyond hope. Like the undervaluing of Green political contributions to the 1980s, the overstatement of Eastern bloc environmental distress may be equally flawed. Schreiber, who now travels the old East extensively as a World Bank economist, says that "the environment there is bad but nowhere near as bad as suggested in the Western press. Assuming the Eastern countries invigorate their economies and acquire modern energy-efficiency and pollution-control systems, problems there should rather quickly transit the same cycle of peaking and decline we observe in the developed world." Schreiber grew up in the Ruhr Valley, the foundry corridor of Germany. During his childhood, the region was filthy. Today the Ruhr is reasonably clean, though industrial production continues apace. Early in the next century, the valley should be nearly pristine, with steel mills still thrumming. Schreiber thinks that the same can happen throughout the old Eastern bloc.

The pending rebound of the environment that the Soviet system tried to destroy has implications for understanding the resilience of nature and the resilience of Green politics. During the 1980s the Greens appeared capable of becoming a leading force in European politics, and they now are in remission; but Green sentiment may rebound as surely as nature will.

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The rise of the Green movement in Europe can be attributed to several forces. One was the beginning of the end of the nuclear buildup, made palpable in Europe by the campaign to keep NATO from deploying the Pershing II Missile, a campaign in which Petra Kelly played a prominent role. Another reason was the decline of ardor for Marxism. Student recruitment, the chief source of troops for the European hard left, began to falter in the early 1980s. At about the same time, interest in environmentalism was rising, and the Greens drew recruits whom the hard left once might have signed on.

A succession of ecological calamities aided the rise of the Greens. Bhopal in 1984; Chernobyl in 1986; Exxon's notion of seamanship in 1989. In 1988, just before a round of European by-elections, some 12,000 seals washed up dead on North Sea beaches. The cause is still not understood; traces of industrial chemicals were found in seal tissue. Seeming an omen of Europe's ecological future, the seal deaths helped the Greens to significant ballot wins that year.

While Green consciousness in the West was building, a parallel and ultimately more significant movement rose in the East. The emphasis on environmental concerns worldwide put the old Soviet superstructure in a dicey position. According to doctrine, there could be no ecological abuse under communism, such ills flowing from the exploitative profit motive. The actual situation was nearly out of control. A few examples: air toxics readings in the "Black Triangle" manufacturing region of Poland, Czechoslovakia and East Germany often ran 100 times the World Health Organization standard; industrial pollution in the Elbe River and the once magnificent Lake Baikal were at levels worse than any ever found in the United States; Bulgarian river quality was so bad that several rivers were declared unsafe for use as industrial process water.

Because many environmental problems are technical in nature—open to resolution by the engineers that Soviet society prided itself on turning out—Moscow began to tolerate some public discussion of ecological harm. What would in retrospect be revealed as an important small fissure in the Soviet monolith opened in 1980, when the Polish Ecology Club published a study condemning hydrogen fluoride emissions from an aluminum smelter near Skawina. Local rain was so acidic that the windows of houses around the plant were dissolving. The Warsaw regime admitted the problem, and it installed at Skawina one of the Soviet bloc's initial pollution control systems. "This was the first time under Polish communism that a private, nongovernmental organization had formal influence on official policy," Maria Guminska, president of the PEC, told me in Katowice in 1992.

Creeping official acknowledgment of environmental distress played a role in establishing a precedent for public discussion of other Soviet bloc problems. Ecology organizations, mostly aligned with democracy movements, sprang up throughout the Warsaw Pact. Disgust with Soviet ecological mismanagement became something all factions of incipient democracy groups could agree on. Eventually Vaclav Havel took office in free Czechoslovakia declaring that "the environmental disaster is the leading crisis facing our nation."

Having had a constructive influence on one of the primary political achievements of the age, the reasonably peaceful breakup of the Soviet Union, the Green movement proceeded to blow its position with remarkable speed, and they were drummed out in the 1991 and 1992 elections. One reason was that the leaders of the Greens made some remarkably idiotic quasi-Bolshevist statements just as the monolith was collapsing. Kelly expressed horror at the notion of the reunification of Germany—not for fear that a united Germany would arise again as an imperial power, but because she believed that East Germany would be better off independent. Absent Soviet despotism, Kelly reasoned, East Germany could become the workers' paradise of which moral socialists dream. Such sentiment was out of touch with the body politic of the freed Eastern lands, where support was nearly unanimous for conversion to the Western approach, if only owing to the false belief that instant affluence would be conferred. Green candidates began to look foolish, and lost.

Green politicians may have faded in Europe, but Green authors proliferate. Among the most distinguished is Anna Bramwell, a former Oxford research fellow who now runs an environment branch of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development. Bramwell entered the public eye with the publication of *Ecology in the 20th Century*, which chronicled the rise of environmental thought and exposed the political expediencies beneath the Green guise of uncalculating nobility. The latter aspect ignited controversy, since *Ecology in the 20th Century* was published in 1989, the year that environmental orthodoxy hit its peak with the Exxon *Valdez* and Earth as *Time*'s "Planet of the Year." (It was, as Jay Leno observed, a rigged award: all the judges were from Earth.) Bramwell was disparaged in many quarters for daring to criticize Green thinking. As she later put it, "discussing the roots of ecology to an audience of pained undergraduate Green sympathizers made me realize the impenetrability of the partisan mind." *Ecology in the 20th Century* is likely to stand as a definitive work, and established Bramwell as one of Europe's two leading contemporary ecological commentators (the other being Frances Cairncross, author of *Costing the Earth*, who, like Bramwell, is both an English woman and a political and environmental moderate).

In her book Bramwell traces the intellectual and political antecedents of modern ecological thought, showing where its idealism has been sustained and where self-interest had crept in. Bramwell details how much of what is now called environmental thought had its recent origins in "soil" thinking,

For Edmund Under a Tree in Summer

Face up, laid on the bench to be changed, little squinter,
will you one day remember what you saw: shadows
among shifting wedges of flash, that moving mosaic
doomed to dim with time to patterns of leaves and sky,
another shaded, sunny day like all the rest.
To hell with experience. What you have new, I want.
No sparrows ferrying their fears to the highest branches,
but shapes—all timed swoop and turn, poise and hop.
Nothing but light and movement and the intimate call
of sense on sense, the body open and untaught
and rapt, Edmund, bottom bare, brow puckered,
feet treading nameless currents in the air.

SANDY SOLOMON

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which appealed to the working classes of Europe, for whom control of their own land had long been both an economic and sentimental goal. The turn-of-the-century British Soil Association, for example, promoted both proper care of farm resources and more equitable farm ownership, anticipating the 1980s, when Eastern bloc Green movements promoted both ecology and democracy.

Bramwell's new book does not match the standard of her earlier one. The introduction of *The Fading of the Greens* is a "reply to my critics" section, always a bad sign. Bramwell goes on to explain that her analysis of Green politics is increasingly influenced by "my growing belief that any attempt to control resource use by means of state planning is bound to fail"—true enough, but somewhat afield of Green thinking of the 1990s, the focus of which has shifted from arms control and nationalization of industry to pollution reduction, slow growth and social equity. Paul Lannoye, leader of the Green Group in the European Parliament, told me in 1992 that "Greens no longer object to market mechanisms per se. Everyone knows it's a free market world now. What Greens want is market mechanisms modified for general conservation and for social progress." General conservation makes a sensible current goal for Green politics, given that Europe has twice as many people as the United States, living in half as much land. Future development there simply must be of the sustainable variety.

Bramwell details the splashy rise of the Greens from their appearance in the late 1970s to notable influence in the mid-1980s (when Greens held 6 percent of the Swedish parliament and forty-four seats in the Bundestag) to the creation of parallel Green movements in the old Eastern bloc (Ecoglasnost in Hungary, the Polish Ecology Club in Poland) to the wipe out at the polls suffered in 1991 (when Kelly and all other German Greens were defeated at the federal level). She details, too, the rise of environmentalism in establishment European politics. The 1980s began with Margaret Thatcher calling environmentalists "the enemy within," loaded words in postwar European politics. That decade ended with Thatcher advocating the abolition of chlorofluorocarbons and otherwise praising ecological initiatives. She had discovered the same thing that her soulmate Ronald Reagan, who also came to office planning to cut back on ecological regulation, discovered: even conservative legislatures in conservative times were inclined to make environmental protection stronger, in response to a public almost universally converted to favoring more pollution control and less resource waste.

But beyond providing a chronicle and explaining the differences in various Green denominations (in Germany, for example, "realos" believe in negotiation with industry while "fundis" or "fundamentalists" preach no compromise), Bramwell doesn't tell us much about the Green mind, and she seems to write about Greens mainly in the past tense, which strikes me as a mistake. Her analysis of American environmentalism betrays that it was composed from a continent away. Bramwell inexplicably declares that the movie *Easy Rider* helped launch environmentalism in the United States. She writes that carbon taxes "will soon be put into place" in America (Bill Clinton hasn't so much as proposed them) and that "if the victory of President Clinton's Democrats had not filled the gap, there would now be a Green Party in the United States," which seems improbable.

Bramwell's two books contain interesting comments about European environmentalism, but they are both rather pallid, bereft of reporting or firsthand detail. This is disappointing, given that many Greens are engaging people and many European ecological problems are striking. Last year I visited the Czech industrial city of Most, in northern Bohemia. Smokestacks of power plants and steel mills, all running without even the rudimentary pollution controls found in the United States in the 1920s, were interspersed in a skyline of grim Stalinist high-rise worker housing that appeared to be a bad Gothic parody of civilization. On six occasions in 1992, winter temperature inversions held so much pollution in the air of the city that "smog holidays" were declared. The week I visited, residents held handkerchiefs over their mouths as they walked down city streets.

More than anything else, environmental decline in the Eastern bloc was caused by waste in the Soviet system, which produced all the disagreeable effects of industrial life without the compensating virtue of material comfort. Consider that energy use per capita in East Germany was, on the day of reunification, 25 percent higher than in West Germany, though the East German standard of living was substantially lower. West Germany had market-disciplined industry, energy-efficient technology and ecological regulations with teeth. Like the other old Soviet states, East Germany had none of these things.

Acute pollution in the old Eastern bloc stems largely from the burning of lignite, or brown coal, in phenomenal quantities, using boilers lacking even antiquated emission control hardware. Lignite is not burned in any Western nation: it is low in BTU value while having as much as twenty times the sulfur content of the anthracite, or black coal, Western nations employ. (Sulfur is the primary pollutant in coal.) Once, after interviewing some government officials in a soot-caked office building in Krakow—my pocketknife went a half-inch into a tarry pollution residue on the outer wall—I walked down the street to watch a horse-drawn wagon delivering bulk brown coal to the local district heating plant, which on a warm day was mischievously cranking away at high power, discharging unfiltered gross pollution directly into a residential neighborhood. Passing me was a sooty man pushing a wheelbarrow of brown coal, to burn in his home stove. I wanted to shout "Stop! Don't do it!" as one might to an alcoholic walking into a bar.

Outside Krakow I saw Nova Huta, one of the largest steel mills in the world. By engineering layout, Nova Huta is a duplicate of the famed Lenin Works in Magnitogorsk, the mill that lit the sky with fire in 1950s Stalinist photography. Nova Huta had no more environmental controls than would have been found in Pittsburgh in the 1890s. A mill manager said, "Under the Communists we were told that the profit motive was foul, so we could not judge output in any way that sounded like sales accounting. Therefore, we were given goals for coal and ore consumed. So we burned as much coal as possible, in order to meet our goals. In winter we would open the mill doors and take the boilers to full blast, venting the heat into the sky, just to consume coal—deliberate energy waste. Of course, the pollution was unbelievable."

The unbelievable aspect of Eastern European pollution should end reasonably soon, as foundries and power plants are refitted with modern combustion and anti-pollution equipment, as natural gas replaces lignite, as buildings acquire individual furnaces and thermostats so that district heating plants can be retired. (The replacement of coal-fired district heating with individual home gas heat resolved London's hideous early 1950s smog.) The output of toxic pollution in the former Warsaw Pact nations is already declining fast; five-year plans, which emphasized chemical manufacturing at all costs (especially for chemical weapons, now banned and being destroyed), are being replaced with market mechanisms that reward efficient resource use. Within a few decades, the old Soviet bloc should

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Now that formal peace has been established between Israel and Jordan—a peace that has de facto prevailed for over 20 years—many believe that the next step should be a peace treaty between Syria and Israel, that in order to attain such a peace it would be necessary for Israel to return the Golan Heights to Syria, and that, after such return, U.S. troops should be stationed on the Golan so as to safeguard the peace between the two countries.

What are the facts?

Should Israel Return the Golan? A point can be made that the whole idea of Israel's yielding the Golan Heights to Syria in order to obtain peace has no merit. Syria's historic claim to the Golan is dubious. The Golan is a desolate plateau that covers less than one percent of Syria's territory. Its only purpose for Syria is as a launching pad for attacks against Israel. For Israel, on the other hand, it provides indispensable strategic depths against attack and the ability to monitor any hostile movement on the part of the Syrians. The current Israeli government seems to be disposed to return part or all of the Golan to Syria. But it would be a first in the history of the world that, in order to attain peace, the victor returned to the vanquished aggressor any territory that had been acquired in the conflict. A much saner and more justified approach would be for Syria, in the spirit of "land for peace", to yield the Golan to Israel. It would be a small price to pay for peace.

There are those who believe that if such a return of part or all of the Golan should ultimately be agreed upon, a United States military force should be stationed indefinitely in the area in order to serve as a buffer between the two countries. One wonders what peace it could be if it required outside military force to keep the erstwhile enemies apart. But there are practical reasons why stationing U.S. forces on the Golan would be a very bad idea.

A Potential Vietnam-like Scenario. U.S. forces on the Golan would be stationed in an area populated by a menagerie of well-armed terrorists, proxies of hostile radical regimes, such as those of Syria itself, but also of Iran, Iraq, Libya and others. They would not hesitate to target U.S. servicemen. Can one doubt that a suicide bomber would wish to find glory be blowing up a U.S. barracks and killing perhaps hundreds of U.S. soldiers, just as happened in Lebanon in 1983? And it's clear that an outraged American public would demand the immediate return of its troops from such a costly project that is of no discernible benefit to the United States. Putting a U.S. military presence into this stormy junction would inevitably drag the United States into costly inter-Arab and Arab-Israel disputes and would deepen Russia's involvement in the region.

> "Involvement of the U.S. as a military buffer between Syria and Israel...could involve the United States in a Vietnam-like scenario, certainly a most unwelcome development."

Israelis have always fought their own battles. If U.S. troops were introduced into the area, Israel would become militarily dependent on the United States and that would be to the detriment of both countries. Because Israel is the most important strategic and political asset that the United States has in the entire Middle East, an area of immense geopolitical importance to our country. Deployment of U.S. troops on the Golan would change Israel's role from being such an asset to that of becoming a potentially substantial liability.

A U.S. military presence on the Golan, an area immediately adjacent to the Syrian capital of Damascus, would in time be perceived by Syria as an infringement on its sovereignty. President Assad or his successor could therefore be expected to push for eventual removal of such force, similar to Egypt's demand in 1967 for withdrawal of U.N. troops from Sinai—the event that triggered the Six-Day-War. Thus, war rather than peace could result form a deployment of U.S. troops. Involvement of the U.S. as a military buffer between Syria and Israel could be incredibly expensive in dollars, in casualties and in political capital. Worst of all, entering this quagmire could involve the United States in a Vietnam-line scenario, certainly a most unwelcome development.

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make the same transition already observed in places like Pittsburgh, which as recently as the 1920s had streetlights on at noon owing to cumulonimbus pollution, yet today has industrial production with pollution levels declining toward insignificant. The Eastern bloc ecological recovery, prolonged as it will seem to those who must live through it, will seem rocket-propelled by the standards of nature.

Optimism about the environmental future is even easier to feel for Western Europe, which trails the United States in regulation (unleaded gasoline has only recently become common in E.U. states, for instance), but is catching up. Western Europe will likely reach a near-zero emission standard within the lifetimes of today's generation. As this happens, paradoxically, the need for the Greens will be reborn. Petra Kelly's life can help explain why.

Born in the former West Germany, raised through her teen years in Virginia, by age 30 Kelly became one of the best-known figures in Europe. After co-founding the German Greens in 1979—in *Thinking Green!* Kelly writes that it broke her heart to abandon the declining Social Democrats—she won election to the Bundestag but could as often be found outside it, leading demonstrations against her own legislature. Kelly gained much of her notoriety by campaigning against NATO deployment of the Pershing II Missile, a far more emotional issue in Europe than in the United States.

Though her reputation was ostensibly as an environmentalist, Kelly's grasp of this subject was superficial. Thus, in *Thinking Green!* she calls the greenhouse effect a danger "as great as nuclear war"—a common instant-doomsday overstatement of the 1980s, to be sure, but no less embarrassing to read from someone considered a student of ecological theory. She was a tireless organizer, and as a proponent of nonviolence, Kelly symbolized an important alternative to the terrorist fury that haunts the German hard left. In adulthood Kelly converted from Catholicism to Buddhism, becoming close to the Dalai Lama and saying she was drawn by "the premise of never hurting anyone and finding God within yourself."

By the end of the 1980s Kelly had rocky dealings with the very Green Party that she had helped found: partly a reaction against her celebrity status, partly owing to the rage that Kelly expressed when it was revealed that a high German Green official had been a Stasi agent. Many Greens wanted to look the other way about connections to

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the old Soviet regime, since the conservatives, too, had their Eastern bloc infiltrators. Kelly could not forgive, if only because such links spoiled her idealistic dream that her cause was above politics. In 1992 Kelly, aged 45, was found dead in the apartment she shared with Gert Bastion, a former German general whose resignation to become a nuclear freeze supporter caused one of the many sensations that accompanied Kelly's life. Bastion's body lay nearby, a pistol in a powder-burned hand. Police ruled the deaths a suicide pact, Kelly shot by the 69-year-old Bastion while she slept.

Since then it has been whispered on the European left that Kelly and Bastion were assassinated by German authorities, by the Chinese secret police, by the mysterious Them at the center of the conspiracy universe. Assassination seems unlikely, given that the deaths happened when superpower tensions were at an all-time low. Some Greens have suggested that Kelly was driven to suicidal despondency by violence against foreigners in the new Germany. But nativism is an evil to be opposed, and opposition is what always animated Kelly, not what depressed her. A third prospect is that Bastion—who had a tormented relationship with his former wife—murdered Kelly as she slept, then completed the act of cowardice by removing himself to avoid facing the consequences. Greens really don't like to talk about this interpretation, since Bastion was a general who forsook his stars and therefore a gallant figure for the European left.

An intriguing aspect of Kelly's thought, often alluded to in *Thinking Green!* though unfortunately never spelled out, is the notion that the materialistic approach to life is in the long run a greater threat to people, its apparent beneficiaries, than to the environment. For instance, Kelly once said, "Supposedly our possessions belong to us, but we live as if we belong to our possessions." Perhaps the Dalai Lama put this thought into Kelly's head. If so, he was wise to do so, for in its unease with materialism Green thinking is onto something of larger significance than any current ecological cause.

Though environmental orthodoxy cannot bear to admit it, Western society is on its way to establishing a sustainable, zero-emission means of existence. Pollution and unrestrained development, two primary Green issues of the 1980s, are in decline in the West. Early in the next century, pollution will be essentially over in the developed world: "environmentalism" as we now understand the term may no longer be necessary, as few gross ecological outrages will remain. But the shallow aspects of the materialist lifestyle will persist. Indeed, it may worsen as clean, sustainable production extends the cycle of consumption indefinitely. Long after the last dirty smokestack has been rendered clean by technological improvements, the relationship between technology and the human soul will remain unresolved.

Green sentiment is right in supposing that human beings will never find harmony or contentedness until work-and-spend is displaced as the first focus of daily life. Overcoming consumerism is a struggle that may take centuries, one in which the forces that now call themselves Greens or environmentalists should eventually play a focal role. The Green movement's glory days may be still to come.

GREGG EASTERBROOK's book, *A Moment on the Earth: Why Nature Needs Us*, will be published this spring by Viking.

TRB *continued from page 4*

tact with reality—in short, to be Gingrich.

For much of America, the question of how nearly narrowcasting approximates PBS is beside the point. More than 40 percent of children live in homes that don't have cable—no Learning Channel, no Nickelodeon. For their parents, the case for public broadcasting has gotten unambiguously stronger in recent years, as the major networks, under pressure from cable and from Fox, have gotten sleazier. In a poll commissioned by PBS, half of the respondents said public television is more important than ever, and about 10 percent said it was less important than before.

For a man who considers himself the vox populi, Gingrich was remarkably slow to fathom public sentiment toward PBS. He started out assuming that a routine incitement of class resentment would carry the day. PBS, he said two weeks ago, is a "sandbox for elites," a plaything for "rich, upper-class people" who produce "biased television." Then the PBS poll came out, saying that some 80 percent of Americans oppose cuts in funding. Gingrich reflexively started railing about how "a small group of elitists" is "running around the country using taxpayers' money to lobby"—"an example why the funding ought to be cut." (By that logic, Representative Nancy Pelosi pointed out, every major defense contractor should lose its funding.) Then a less suspect poll, sponsored by CNN, found that 76 percent of Americans favor at least some continued funding for public broadcasting. Gingrich, meanwhile, was cooling down. His plan to "zero out" CPB was "not fixed in concrete," he said.

The miscalibration of his opening salvo against CPB don't bode well for his larger war against the deficit. He seems to be starting to actually believe his phony populist campaign line—that balancing the budget is a simple matter of carrying out the will of the people, who want Beltway "elites" to stop wasting their money on big government. In truth, big government is much like PBS: both spend most of their time giving people things they want—Social Security, Medicare, Big Bird.

If Gingrich suffered an outbreak of truth-telling, and explained that balancing the budget requires widespread sacrifice, CPB would be due its cut of 5 or 10 percent, like everyone else. But that's a moot point. He continues to say Social Security is "off the table," and his recent high-profile speech on rethinking Medicare "from the ground up" turned out to say only that Medicare is too "centralized" and "bureaucratic." It's those damned elites again! As we watch Gingrich face off against Barney—and watch him lose the opening round—we are seeing more signs that his "revolution" will falter, a victim of its dishonesty.

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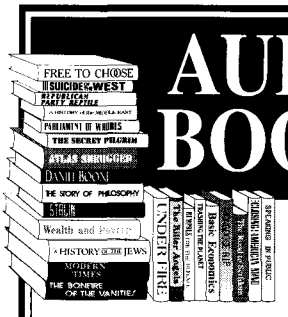
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NEW YORK DIARIST

Sunrise, sunset

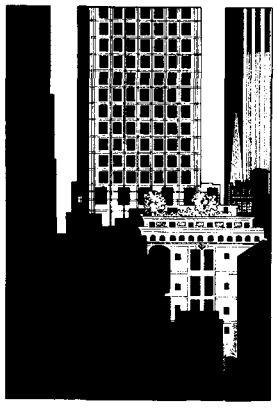
AS SOON AS I FIND OUT WHERE Andrew Lloyd Webber lives I'm going to stalk him, watch his every move, get as close to him as his clothing. If he goes to a gambling casino, I will bet on his numbers. Should he visit a race track, I'll bet my kingdom on his horse. Webber is, I have concluded, the luckiest man who ever lived—a creator of sensationally successful musical plays so sensationally bad that at the moment you think "this can't get any worse"—referring to his music or someone else's lyrics (it hardly matters)—it *does* get worse, it gets twice as bad; and then you think, "Well, the fellow has hit rock bottom this time," and thwack—the floor drops out from under you and down you go again. Whooo!

MEANWHILE, ALL ABOUT YOU, A packed house teary with brainless gratitude and lighter for having shelled out hundreds of dollars for seats, is rising to its feet at no discernible provocation. "Bravo!" shouts a woman in the orchestra *at* the orchestra, before the curtain goes up. The man is a genius for luck, I tell you. He has done his best awful work at a time in history when nobody cares if anything is good or not—the worse, the better—a decade or two of astrological convenience.

YOU ARE READING THE BARELY contained astonishment of a man who has just seen *Sunset Boulevard.* One of my closest friends gave me tickets for my birthday. When we all staggered out of the theater, I asked for another present.

SHALL I DESCRIBE THE PLAY TO you and spoil it for you? Impossible. Webber simply did what he always does—got hold of what was once a great story, threw some notes at it (no more than three), plopped a maniac on a staircase and voila! Not since *Les Misérables* have I seen anything so misérable, and, in fact, I thought that Webber had written *Les Mis,* too, the deft touch of nothingness was so similar. But no. There must be a copycat killer on the loose. It matters not. To his credit Webber still has *Cats, The Phantom of the Opera, Starlight Express, Joseph and the Many-Colored Multiplex,* or something. They are all running still, and will run forever, as will *Sunset Boulevard,* on and on, author, author. Who cares? Is everybody happy? Apparently.

THE NIGHT I WENT TO SEE *Sunset Boulevard* the audience consisted of people clearly old enough to have seen the movie. So they also had to know that there are two brilliant twists in the plot: (1) when Norma Desmond thinks that she is wanted back by her old studio to revive her movie career, only to learn that it is her limousine the studio wants; and (2) when her psychopathically faithful butler (played psychopathically, which is to say naturally, by Erich von Stroheim in the film and by a bald falsetto lookalike in the play) reveals that he was not only Norma's first director but her first husband as well.



SO WHAT HAS LUCKY Webber done to those two heart-breaking revelations? He has stuffed them into one of his three notes, that's what; has given them such short shrift that even if you knew what was going to happen in the play, you could not follow it.

BUT THE OLD-ENOUGH AUDIENCE had to know, had to have seen that wonderful mad movie. And they had to know, too, that the whole power of the story had been botched. What's more: they had to know that there were such musicals in the past as *West Side Story, Cabaret, Pal Joey, My Fair Lady* and even *Born Yesterday,* which they were not. Still, up they rose like geysers at every "song." Where did we go wrong?

I MISS THE FEAR OF NUCLEAR obliteration; at least it promised a quick end. Now, with a handful of God-given exceptions, the culture howls through eternity like Marley's ghost—stupid, lazy, boring—and the audiences love every minute. The critics, knowing not up from down, help them along. The day I went to *Sunset Boulevard* I had the joy of reading a book review by one Margo Jefferson in *The New York Times.* A book of mine had the misfortune (I do not have the luck of Andrew Lloyd Webber) to fall under Jefferson's undiscerning eye last year, so I always read her reviews with special attention—mainly to see if I can find a sentence with any learning or judgment or syntax. Last week the *Times* announced that Jefferson would be taken off books to review *theater.* And right now Webber is at work preparing his next masterpiece. See what I mean?

WHEN DID CRITICAL JUDGMENT quit the country, I wonder? Did it leave a letter? I would like to think that Richard Nixon had a hand in the disappearance, but in fact I think it occurred around the time that Jimmy Carter asked us to turn down our thermostats. We had made it through both Watergate and Jerry Ford, who was, in a way, a sterner test. And we had at last elected a man of the people who would lead us into the world of individual responsibility again—caring for the underdog, community, generosity, America, old America. Instead, the president told us to turn down our thermostats for the moral healing of the nation. When that request reached the public ear, something must have snapped. You could almost hear the nation rise as one, rise as one would at a play by Andrew Lloyd Webber, and shout, as one, "Make mine dumb and dumber."

"COMING UP," ANswered television. "Be right with you," said most of the book business and the movie business, and journalism, too. If the country was going to throw away its mind, could journalists be far behind?

AND, FROM THE MUCK AND THE mire of thought and productivity that buried the land these twenty years, a star was born—as Norma Desmond was called repeatedly in *Sunset Boulevard* "the greatest star of all." And he was an English star to boot. The least musical civilization in history produced the richest maker of musicals America has ever known. Bravo! Encore!

WHAT STORY WILL WEBBER RUIN next? It is exciting to contemplate, is it not? *King Lear? El Cid? Tamerlane?* Whatever it is, it will be big (I mean BIG) and lavish (I mean MONEY), and Jefferson will call it "a work of rare beauty and intelligence. I couldn't put it down." Bus loads from Hicksville will roll into Broadway. Grown men will weep. And Webber will haul his billions home in wheelbarrows. There I shall be waiting for him, hiding in the bushes, following his every move, yearning for his incredible good fortune to rub off. Oh, just a little? As I watch him through his windows, I sing to myself: "Luck, be a lady tonight." He leans out and yells: "Stop singing that shit! I can't write a note!"

ROGER ROSENBLATT

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This road crew plowed the waste out of government

and that's no snow job

It was a rough winter in Saratoga County, New York. It was bitter cold and it snowed twice as much as normal.

But instead of icy roads, gaping potholes and complaints, taxpayers got more than their money's worth.

Not only did the snow get plowed. The guard rails were mended, trees were removed, drains were cleared, highways and bridges were repaired. All for less than it previously cost just to plow the roads. So much less that the *Albany Times Union* called it a "$100,000 success story."

What made the difference? A new labor-management initiative that gave front-line transportation workers the chance to participate in management decisions. It was a change the union -- CSEA/AFSCME Local 1000 -- had been pushing for years. Instead of being told when to work and how to perform their jobs, workers were able to set priorities, define tasks and revamp schedules.

One of their first changes paid big dividends. Instead of keeping fully staffed snow crews in place every night -- whether it snowed or not -- workers were redeployed for daytime repair projects.

The result: taxpayers saved $80,000 -- money that used to go to outside contractors for these routine maintenance jobs. These and other savings more than compensated for the overtime needed to plow the streets on the nights it snowed.

There's a lesson in this for government. It's a lesson successful corporations have learned. Treat workers as resources. Trust the people who actually perform the job to make decisions. Cut out unnecessary management layers. Redesign the government workplace.

Taxpayers benefit. Services improve. Everyone wins. And that's no snow job.

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